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ABSTRACT

Despite the administrative leadership that most principals receive in university courses, their most useful learning doesn't occur until they are on the job. The new knowledge--much of it the result of trial and error, success and failure--is gained in relative isolation. This book focuses on the critical work of school principals, offering practical wisdom, conceptual ideas, and useful examples from many settings. It provides ideas, strategies, resources, and reflective opportunities for practicing and prospective principals to facilitate educational improvement on a daily basis. Success in the principalship depends on many factors. The book addresses these factors in seven parts, with chapters included under each theme heading. These parts include: (1) the principal's role; (2) critical skills for effective leadership; (3) honoring the school's meaning; (4) working together to build a learning organization; (5) keeping the pipes from leaking: adding meaning to traditional practice; (6) understanding your constituencies; and (7) professional and personal issues. Each chapter concludes with a set of reflective questions. Five figures and three tables are included. Contains 86 references and additional readings. (LMI)

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The Principal's Companion

To Pat and Loyd Wolfe

The Principal's Companion

Strategies and Hints to Make the Job Easier

Pam Robbins
Harvey B. Alvy

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Foreword

Across the United States, policymakers, practitioners, and parents are concerned about supporting and building successful, high-quality schools. Although there are many different approaches to restructuring or reforming schools, one factor seems to be part of everyone's framework—the school principal. Whether one is considering site-based management or shared decision making, total quality management or curricular reform, central to the success of these efforts is effective leadership of the school principal.

Many useful and important books, articles, and materials have been developed for the many reform efforts that are being implemented in the United States and elsewhere. This book focuses on the critical work of school principals, with practical wisdom, conceptual ideas, and useful examples from many different settings. It helps answer the questions, What skills and knowledge will help principals lead and manage better schools? and How can principals become successful leaders? It adds extremely relevant knowledge and skills for innovative reformers and for more traditional leaders alike.

Let me make a few observations about the importance of school leaders, especially principals. To begin with, the daily work of school principals is extremely complex, demanding, intense, and, at times, surprising. Daily, principals must solve complex problems of practice, deal with demands and conflicts from parents and students, and maintain an intense work schedule filled with drama (will the new curriculum fly with parents?), tragedy (a student is killed in a car accident), and, thankfully, comedy (a class accurately copies the principal's mannerisms for a school play). The days of principals are full of surprise; most days have a mix of totally unexpected happenings, from the birth of gerbils to the wonderful successes of students. It is within the flow of these days that leadership, decision making, school improvement, and change occur. This book provides a solid set of interesting and shrewd suggestions for making the most of the panoply of these days—suggestions and approaches that can be used immediately by practicing principals.

A second key feature of principals and their complex work is the paradox that although they must gain certification through university training, much, if not most, of their learning occurs later, on the job. In the best cases, preservice training affords aspiring administrators concepts and models, as well as a modicum of practical knowledge, that will get them started. But once on the job, these concepts and models get forged in the press of daily work. This handbook contributes to both preservice and inservice realms, increasing the cache of available and easily readable information for this difficult but important role.

This book is the product of two educators who have worked with hundreds of schools, educators, and other organizations around the world. Their wide experience and insights permeate this book. These 22 chapters supply an excellent mix of the conceptual and the practical, the concrete and the abstract. It should bridge the needs of preservice programs and inservice professional development, as well as be useful to individuals who can learn on their own. Books for principals should foster careful thinking and relevant new skills in an easily accessible format. This book accomplishes these things. The richness of ideas, breadth of examples, and thoughtful questioning make this book a unique tool for the development of more successful leaders.

Effective principals should not be a luxury that schools only occasionally enjoy. Rather, effective leadership is the right of all schools. This handbook provides a rich array of ideas and suggestions for achieving this important end.

KENT D. PETERSON
University of Wisconsin–Madison

Preface

A principal interacts with hundreds of individuals on a daily basis, but the work life is ironically often one characterized by isolation, for there is no colleague on site with a similar role. Although engaging in social interaction constantly, the principal often recalls feeling isolated when reflecting on the merit of key decisions. Alone, the principal often wonders, "Am I doing the right thing? Is this the best way to approach the task? How will tomorrow's conference with Kathy affect her sense of self-worth?" As one principal reflected on his role, "I wake up in the middle of the night and realize that when I ask Xavier to change his teaching assignment to a different grade, it will cause real disequilibrium for him, although I think it's a good professional move. Xavier might think to himself, 'The principal doesn't think I'm doing a good job in fourth grade. What happens if it doesn't work out in my new assignment? Will there be another place for me? Will I be able to return to Grade 4?' " Because of this often solitary role of the position, *The Principal's Companion* has been written.

The primary purpose of this book is to provide ideas, strategies, resources, and reflective opportunities for practicing and prospective principals to facilitate educational improvement when and where it counts—on a daily basis, in each and every school.

There are countless theories and ideas about leadership, but there is no one secret formula for success. Creative solutions and creative leadership are required of all principals. Increasingly, principals speak of new demands on their role—demands for which formal schooling or previous positions could not possibly prepare one. As one principal put it, "I try to make thoughtful decisions. Operating by the seat of one's pants is not the best way 'to do' the principalship, although it's often necessary." Much of the literature on educational leadership is theoretical. Although principals cannot succeed without a fundamental understanding of both theory and practice, because of the immediacy of workplace demands, they often hunger for tried-and-true practices.

Experience tells us that many principals have discovered strategies to tackle problems similar to those faced by other principals. Because of the isolation that characterizes the principalship, however, there are seldom avenues to tap this tremendous potential resource. *The Principal's Companion* has tapped many sources to provide practical strategies to the principal who often operates alone.

School principals need to know that they are part of a learning community of education companions working together to help principals be the best they can be. This combined collegial effort will help principals create the kind of teaching and learning environment that supports teachers' efforts to bring about successful student performance. The loneliness of the principalship is well documented in the literature. The interactive nature of the book, with reflective questions at the end of each chapter, is intended to help principals feel as if there is a colleague out there with whom to interact. The reader also will "hear" the voices of many practitioners who are quoted throughout the text. This will give prospective principals a "feel" for what it is like in the field and help practitioners connect with others and find out that all of us make mistakes, meet challenges—and succeed.

This book is written primarily for current and aspiring principals. It will also be of interest to leadership consultants, staff developers, university consultants, university professors, school board members, and parents. However, it should be of interest to anyone studying school leadership. The book addresses leadership and management issues similar to those faced by leaders in business and industry. The content is a synthesis of theory aligned with tried-and-true strategies used by practicing and former principals, as well as business leaders and facilitators from principals' academies. The variety of topics, ideas, and approaches is designed to reflect the changing demands and contexts associated with the multifaceted principal's role. Further, the authors try never to lose sight of the fact that the principal, most of all, serves students, teachers, parents, and community members and works in an environment that requires effective human relations skills and respect for the gift that each person brings to a school.

Recognizing that principals are quite busy and have little time to waste, the chapters have been kept short and to the point. Each chapter reflects a topic that principals have indicated is important. The ideas, experiences, strategies, and techniques described in each chapter are founded in research and practice. Each chapter concludes with a set of questions. There is also space following the last question of each chapter for the reader to write in ideas or reflections that have been inspired by the chapter or things he or she wants to try. This is an invitation to write between the lines, to add to one's collective knowledge base, thus enhancing the value of the book for the reader. Each chapter is designed to stand on its own and can be read in one sitting. Because of that, some ideas will appear in several chapters but perhaps be addressed with a different perspective.

Success in the principalship depends on many factors. The book addresses these factors in seven parts, with chapters included under each theme heading. These parts are as follows:

1. **The Principal's Role** is that of learner, manager, creator of the learning organization, and shaper of school culture. In this section, we make a strong case for recognizing that successful principals play a variety of roles—all of which are necessary for success. Fulfilling the roles that create a climate for growth, making sure schedules work, and setting a personal example of learning from successes and mistakes are some of the issues addressed in this section.
2. **Critical Skills for Effective Leadership** examines and makes many suggestions regarding effective human relations strategies and the vitally important function of time management and working effectively with the central office. We emphasize that these are critical areas because one cannot get the job done without succeeding in cultivating, practicing, and maintaining collegial relationships at the school site and central office, and without taking control of one's time.
3. **Honoring the School's Meaning** concentrates on the importance and process of mission building as a guiding force in the organization. We also examine implementing change in a way that provides meaning and consistent renewal to the school's mission.
4. **Working Together to Build a Learning Organization** links together a variety of components that must operate together if a school is to truly be a learning community. These components include building a collaborative environment, addressing critical issues in instruction and curriculum that relate to classroom decisions, meeting a variety of professional needs based on stages of a teacher's professional development, win/win supervision and evaluation of teachers to promote quality teacher decision making, and strategies to maximize feedback

to teachers regarding their performance in meeting professional goals and student needs.

5. **Keeping the Pipes From Leaking: Adding Meaning to Traditional Practice** looks at the importance of providing meaning to such traditional events as faculty meetings and the first days of school. Often principals miss the opportunities to see how these events can serve as key tools for shaping the school's culture and providing a foundation for continuous growth. Practical tips to enhance a principal's effectiveness also are described within this section.

6. **Understanding Your Constituencies** provides strategies to enhance one's interactions with students, parents, and the greater community. In this section, we take a holistic approach and view parents and the greater community as part of the school.

7. **Professional and Personal Issues** looks at the individual principal. The focus here is to examine ways for the principal to grow from the status of a newcomer, remain vibrant and healthy, and become a contributing member of the profession.

The individual chapters serve as a menu of options from which the reader can select to meet pressing needs, assist in planning, or use as a resource. Together the sections offer a concise library of both research-based and tried-and-true practices.

We encourage the reader to bring his or her own experience and expertise to each chapter as well as share with other colleagues. In this way, the book serves as an invitation to join in a continuing conversation about the principalship and adds to the collective knowledge base about the role.

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About the Authors

Pam Robbins earned her doctorate in educational administration from the University of California, Berkeley. Her interests include the development of a collaborative workplace, peer coaching, mentoring, site-based management, shared decision making, research on the brain, presentation skills, effective training, leadership skills, and change. Her teaching career began in 1971 in special education. She later taught intermediate grades and coached high school basketball. She has served as a lecturer at several universities and taught at principals' academies in Alaska, California, Kentucky, Tennessee, Massachusetts, Utah, and Pennsylvania. In addition, she has provided national training sessions for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the National Staff Development Council (NSDC), and Phi Delta Kappa (PDK).

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PART I

THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE

1

Leader as Learner

> *Just when I'm ready to retire, I'm beginning to learn what this job is all about.*
>
> A PRINCIPAL AFTER 33 YEARS OF SERVICE

Principal as Lifelong Learner

There is no setting in which the concept of the lifelong learner is more important than a school. In fact, many professionals are beginning to conceptualize the school as a learning community or a learning organization, not only for students but for administrators and teachers. Bennis and Nanus (1985) remind us that successful leaders are "perpetual learners." Senge (1990) suggests that a characteristic of the successful leader is the ability to instill in others the desire to learn what is necessary to help the organization reach its mission. Applying this notion to the principal of a school, the leader can model for all within the workplace what lifelong learning means. For modeling to be effective, it should be sincere, consistent, and purposeful. There are several ways that this can be done.

Learning in Many Contexts

One way the principal can model lifelong learning is by continuing to participate in the development and demonstration of effective teaching practices. For example, a principal collaborating with teachers can help to create faculty meetings in which conversations about teaching become institutionalized through various activities. Another context in which the principal can function as learner is during the supervision process. The following scenario will demonstrate how the leader-as-learner theme is played out in two ways: learning about behaviors and activities that facilitate student and teacher learning and those behaviors and strategies that enhance the principal's effectiveness in the supervisory process. An effective and common supervisory technique includes a preconference in which the principal and teacher, through a questioning process, together "unpack" the teacher's thinking about the lesson to be taught. Together they discuss planned teaching behaviors and the expected student outcomes. They problem-solve potential obstacles and fine-tune the lesson plan. The teacher identifies the focus for the observation, and collaboratively the teacher and principal decide on the best method for data collection. During the observation, the principal, steered primarily by the teacher's request for information, collects data, learning both about curricular and instructional practices that work to produce desired student outcomes and about what types of data collection work to capture the essence of the desired supervisory focus.

In the postconference, the principal and teacher ask questions that foster reflection and analysis of the lesson. Together they discuss what worked to facilitate student learning. At the conclusion of these reflections, they analyze what would be done the same and what would be done differently if the lesson were to be taught again. Additionally, the principal asks, "Thinking about this conferencing process, what strategies and techniques did I use that facilitated your thinking as a teacher?" Furthermore, the principal might ask, "What might I have done differently?" Thus the principal and teacher collaboratively analyze the conferencing practices that enhance or hinder teacher thinking and learning about curriculum and instruction. Together they find ways to make the conferencing experience worthwhile for both.

"Principal as student" experiences can be an innovative way to provide a new perspective and important insights about a school. The principal can spend time in classrooms taking on the role of a student as a participant in a discussion, as a team member in a cooperative group, or as a reader or teacher. What can be a better learning experience for students than to see the principal struggling with these roles? These experiences can be shared, on a schoolwide basis, in faculty meetings or with the parent-teacher organization for the school. Students and teachers appreciate the interest in them and will enjoy the novelty of the situation. If a principal has not functioned in these roles before, it is useful to let teachers know ahead of time "what you're up to."

Principals can teach demonstration lessons and might videotape these to use at a faculty meeting. This provides an opportunity to apply new ideas and practices. Then a principal can talk with staff about experiences in teaching and learnings associated with presenting lessons. This also builds trust as teachers realize the principal has walked in their shoes, is willing to accept feedback from the faculty, and has an understanding of classroom conditions.

Also, the principal functions as a learner by reading and sharing research with teachers and parents. By writing or speaking about new learnings, the principal can pass on knowledge of recent research while modeling a love of learning.

Still another way the principal functions in the learner role is by participating in staff development sessions. Too often principals introduce the speakers and then have to run off to another meeting. Principal participation also points out the importance of these staff development opportunities and validates the teachers' time spent at these same sessions.

When the principal attends a conference, there are frequently opportunities to purchase audio- or videocassettes of sessions. Teachers should be encouraged to do the same. Try picking out the best sessions, purchasing cassettes, and starting a cassette collection in the staff room, teachers' center, or library. These can be borrowed by staff or parents. A follow-up report on the conference or a volunteer brown-bag lunch on key conference ideas can be presented to the staff.

Principals can help to encourage action research projects by individual or groups of teachers on particular educational ideas of interest to the staff. To illustrate, in one particular school, several elementary and high school teachers engaged in a project exploring the use of student portfolios. Teachers met periodically to discuss their experiences and student reactions. The principal facilitated the process by helping to gather articles on portfolios, keeping a record of the project, and helping to develop an action research report with the staff. Several recommendations from the report were used by the staff to pursue the project during the following school year. The portfolio recommendations included

- Continuing the project on a voluntary basis
- Developing portfolio partners among the staff to compare notes every couple of weeks during the year

- Having students in one class share portfolios with other classes
- Collecting more nuts-and-bolts ideas on portfolios
- Finding a quiet area to record or videotape student work
- Refining ways to help students reflect and evaluate their progress
- Assisting teachers to fine-tune their conferencing skills with students
- Providing information for teachers on the "teacher as facilitator" notion for those who desire strategies to organize their classes in order to engage in frequent conversations with individual students

These suggestions by teachers assisted both the principal and teachers in their quest to continually learn. By using the resources of a principal's office, including the use of secretarial services, principals send a clear message of support for staff development and can be a great help to teachers engaged in learning activities.

Principals who solicit comments from the staff members on their job performance at the end of the year send a strong message to the teachers that they seek and appreciate their input as another resource to promote learning. Furthermore, asking for staff feedback models a stance of openness and a commitment to ongoing learning. The following form has been used for several years by one of the authors to gain faculty input on a principal's performance.

> Dear Elementary School Faculty,
>
> Over the years I have asked each faculty that I have worked for to give me helpful hints to improve my job performance. I know that you are all very busy, but I would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to answer the questions below and help me evaluate my performance so I can do a better job next year. Obviously, your comments will remain confidential. If you would like to remain anonymous, please type your comments. Please put your comments in the "Harvey" envelope on Prema's desk. I would appreciate your comments by the last faculty day, May 27.
>
> Thanks,
> Harvey

1. What are some of the things that I am presently doing that you would like to see me continue?
2. What am I presently doing that you would like to see me discontinue next year?
3. What suggestions do you have to help me *improve* my job performance (e.g., Is there a particular area that I should pursue for additional training? Is there a book or article that you suggest I read? etc.)?
4. Additional comments?

This procedure is simple to execute and often yields constructive feedback and helpful ideas. In addition, it provides an opportunity for the principal to assess the perceptions of staff in relation to one's own perception of self.

Principals who have kept reflective journals often share insights derived from this activity with staff. Sometimes this encourages staff members to become reflective about their craft experiences and practices. Barth (1990, pp. 63-73), supporting the notion of leader as learner, emphasizes the tremendous capacity that principals have to release energy in a school by becoming sustained, visible learners themselves. He also describes the phenomenon of an "at-risk" principal as any educator who leaves school at the end of the day with little possibility of continuing learning about the work they do (cited in Sparks, 1993, p. 19). Rolf P. Lynton of the World Health Organization offered some powerful insights about reflection when he noted that we all go through events on a daily basis. What distinguishes an event from an experience is that an event only becomes an experience after you have time to reflect.[1] Each experience offers an opportunity to learn. When teachers, students, and parents see a principal's desire to learn and share ideas, norms and expectations that celebrate learning can develop within a building. Moreover, the leader-as-learner model transfers to the classroom where teachers demonstrate for students that they too are both leaders and learners.

Schoolhouse as a Powerful Context for Learning

Finding time for such reflective endeavors is a challenge and yet critical. "We must also find imaginative ways of separating adults from youngsters at times during the school day for conversation, brainstorming, reflection and replenishment" (Sparks, 1993, p. 20) so that the learning and the growth process continues. Barth (1990) notes, "I believe the schoolhouse itself is the most powerful context for the continuing education of educators" (p. 20). Creating a learning community in some cultures is so valued that a considerable amount of time within the duty day is allocated to this endeavor. For instance, in some Japanese schools, 40% of the duty day is devoted to teacher planning, often in a collaborative context.

Reflecting on our conceptualization of leader as learner, we can see that there are numerous ways to learn while on the job. Once time is identified, learning experiences can come from workshops, class visitations, demonstration lessons, reflective journal writing, books, educational journals, conferences, and discussions with and visitations to other principals.

When Old and New Ideas Converge

A final but important note: As the principal's knowledge and experience increase, he or she is often faced with new ideas that appear to conflict with previous learning. Educators are expected to make either/or decisions regarding innovations that affect instructional practices and consequently students. To illustrate, suppose a district commits to a staff development focus on cooperative learning. Does this mean that the previous insights and learnings from Madeline Hunter's direct instruction model are no longer valid? Rather, the strengths from both instructional approaches should be celebrated. Too often we are encouraged to discard one idea for another. However, leaders as learners should develop the ability to take the best out of each new idea and synthesize information into an eclectic model. This enables the principal to diagnose a situation and draw from a repertoire of strategies to meet a particular need.

A critical learning for leadership is acknowledging that there will always be a need to learn more. One of the most essential behaviors a principal can model is a devotion to lifelong learning, and a willingness to dialogue with members of the learning organization about how new learnings reshape existing knowledge. To demonstrate this ongoing pursuit of knowledge, one principal regularly hangs a sign on the doorknob of her office that reads "Out Learning." This reminds all the members of the learning organization of the importance and power of learning about learning.

Note

1. The authors thank Dr. Steve Atwood of UNICEF for introducing us to Dr. Lynton's ideas.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. What are some things you might do to model "leader as learner"?
2. What might be some observable indicators or artifacts of a school that is functioning as a learning organization?
3. How can principals facilitate a learning environment for adults within a school?
4. Why did you become a school principal, or why would you like to become a principal?
5. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

2

Leader as Manager

The instructional leader also makes sure that the classroom lights are working.

A PRINCIPAL'S VOICE[1]

Although the concept of the principal has shifted from "gatekeeper" (Deal & Peterson, 1994; Goldring & Rallis, 1993) to "instructional leader," "collaborative decision maker," and "leader of leaders," any discussion on leadership can become a romantic concept if leadership is not discussed hand-in-hand with management (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). One has to manage leadership. Yet much of the leadership literature contains a subtle disdain for management. As practitioners, we need to make sure that schedules work, the chalk is in the classroom, and transition times run smoothly. However, one should not be fooled into thinking that success as an educational leader ends with neat bookshelves, quiet hallways, or computerized student records. We must not forget that students should be the ultimate beneficiaries of all management actions.

Good Leadership Requires Effective Management

Effective principals are effective managers. They must communicate and develop relationships with teachers, custodians, secretaries, counselors, librarians, students, cafeteria workers, parents, transportation workers, and central office and security personnel. As managers, it is critical to display respect for every individual who contributes to the success of the school. Principals should remember, always, that although some employees may appear to be on the periphery when considering the primary purpose of schooling, everyone contributes in his or her own way to a school's success. Principals must model in all their relationships the behavior that they expect throughout the school.

Moreover, a principal's work produces many additional management challenges. This work involves policies, resources, behaviors, procedures, and data. These challenges can be classified into four categories: classroom, school site, community, and support services. (An additional category, working with central office, is discussed in chapter 6.) These four categories reflect the various arenas in which the leader must function as manager.

Management Responsibilities and Strategies

Classroom

Principals must help to maximize the availability of sufficient and high-quality classroom supplies (e.g., erasers, pencils) and instructional resources (e.g., math manipulatives, globes) to enable teachers to focus their attention on instructional and curricular issues. Thus principals need to be on top of the classroom supply inventory so that key items are available during the year for teachers and students.

This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Some principals delegate this job to a responsible supply clerk or secretary. Others retain this function for themselves. Although it is important to know how to delegate, one can never give up the responsibility for the task. When you delegate, you need to check for clear understanding, provide support, and follow up regularly. If the person to whom you have delegated comes up with an innovation, assure the person that you have confidence in him or her and encourage the resourcefulness, yet make sure you are not the last one to find out about the innovation.

The availability of classroom supplies and instructional resources for staff is heavily reliant on data relating to curricular needs and the quality of the material. One must ask teachers to find out whether the resources are serving their purposes. Does the particular instructional resource improve the quality of the educational program? Is there enough money in the budget for a year's supply of cellophane tape? What classroom supplies were consumed completely last year? What instructional resources are in great demand at the start of the school year? What are some of the new resources available to make life easier for the staff? How can the resources be distributed more efficiently? Is waste taking place and why? A variety of people as well as observations can provide this information. System checks are crucial. Ultimately, feedback should provide data about whether supplies are meeting the instructional needs of the students in a quality way. Such feedback could be facilitated by developing a form to solicit input from the staff as to the adequacy and appropriateness of supplies.

Staff members' perceptions of resource availability are another important consideration. The policies for allocating classroom supplies and instructional resources reveal much about the values and beliefs in the organization. For example, is the supply room locked and materials strictly allocated, or is it open with a sign-out sheet? Are the veteran teachers in possession of the best materials? With your own school in mind, reflect on how "the system" works. Does it match the mission of the school?

Thinking about the allocation of resources in relation to the school's mission, if your school promotes enrichment for all students, then you must have enrichment material and classroom options available for various instructional disciplines (e.g., novels, computer resources, independent science projects, challenging math manipulatives) that can be used by all classroom teachers. A teachers' center of resources in a school or district can serve as a central area for instructional material to be used by all teachers. This can diminish greatly the desire to hoard the best instructional material.

With regard to the environment, is your school ecologically conscientious? Are you recycling paper? Does each classroom and the school office collect paper to be reused or sent to a recycling plant? Are plastic containers, cans, and bottles collected for recycling?

Some principals have encouraged staff input on the creation of policies and procedures related to resource requisition and allocation. This is expanding the leadership function of many staff members. These new roles build ownership in school-level practices and policies. Principals have provided teachers with classroom budgets to be used according to the teacher's discretion. If greater teacher involvement in resource allocation follows expanded teacher involvement in curricular and instructional decisions, then the resources will surely be used more efficiently and with greater meaning.

Other managerial responsibilities include such tasks as record keeping for attendance and lateness, lunch count, federal aid to dependent children, and completing cumulative record cards. In general, teachers disdain these responsibilities (as they should!) because these responsibilities keep them away from their primary responsibility—teaching. The principal must carefully review these chores to see what can be removed from the teacher. How can the secretary assist? What responsibilities can be picked up by students, teacher aides, or parent volunteers? For example, students in elementary, middle, and high school can help with lunch count chores for service credit. Consider how technology might be used to free up the teacher. Computerized programs are used in more and more schools to complete various student data records. Each school has a unique set of routines and chores. An important question to ask is, What routines and chores can be eliminated or trimmed in your school?

School Site

A safe environment contributes to an effective school. Furthermore, the physical appearance of a school can contribute to positive or negative school climate or morale. Conversely, the physical appearance of a school reflects the climate. Graffiti and vandalism affect the school and its administration, teachers, students, and community. Thus principals should inform school custodians to remove graffiti immediately and quickly repair broken lights and windows, loose banisters, or damaged lockers to maintain pride in the appearance of the school. Recently, a principal, bothered by the school's drab brown entrance doors, had the art department work with talented students to paint the doors as bright-colored murals. Other schools invite classes to adopt and care for a certain portion of buildings or grounds. Classes at some schools have donated benches, trees, and flower gardens as an indication of their commitment to the school. This has served to significantly decrease vandalism. Principals and teachers encourage classes or school clubs to garden or plant in particular areas.

Management by Wandering Around

In addition to the physical appearance, plant safety is another critical management dimension. One way to assure safety is through managment by wandering around (MBWA). MBWA involves the principal purposefully getting out from behind the desk and walking around the school. In this chapter, the strategy of MBWA refers primarily to maintenance types of concerns. However, MBWA has an additional, powerful application as it pertains to promoting instructional excellence. This will be discussed later. A key attribute of this technique is that the principal must have a clear plan for where the "wandering" will occur. Some principals have identified key areas from classrooms to storage sheds on a checklist, keeping a record of visits to each place. The goal is to visit classrooms frequently and other areas once a month. Make classrooms your top priority. Figure 2.1 is an example of what a list for an elementary principal might look like.

Many principals keep a clipboard by their desk and post this checklist on it. Others keep the list on an index card in their pocket. Then, whenever they have a few minutes here or there, they look down the checklist, determine where they have not visited during the month, and purposefully wander to one of those locations. In doing this, one principal discovered an electrical outlet was located next to a sink in the boys' bathroom. A call to the maintenance department quickly corrected this hazardous condition. A great way to visit classrooms and the rest of the school is with the school custodian. Often a principal meets with the custodian once a month, and they walk around the school (the custodian with a notepad in hand). This enables them to see maintenance needs and communicate about school programs and activities as well as get input from teachers. A walk in one school revealed that the lawn was being watered 5 minutes before physical education classes were going to play on the field. Usually, there are 5 or 10 maintenance requests that result from the walks. Also, this lets the staff know that the principal is interested in the day-to-day running of the school.

Spending time in corridors, classrooms, stairwells, and throughout the building gives the principal a chance to spread good news and caring words to the staff, students, community members, and parents as well as oversee plant safety. Using this approach, the principal is able to manage more than just plant safety. Communication occurs, and disruptions are minimized.

Another proactive management technique is to visit classrooms before or after school to see bulletin boards, special displays, learning centers, and student work. When staff members receive a complimentary note from the principal about their rooms, it is a great way to start the day and reinforces the notion that the classroom is the center of the school. This minimizes classroom intrusions and disruptions.

	September	*October*	*November*
Kitchen			
Cafeteria			
Custodian's office			
Boiler room			
Girls' restroom			
Boys' restroom			
Library			
Storage shed			
Bike rack			
Kindergarten playground			
Regular playground			
Baseball diamond			
Classrooms—Wing A			
Room 1			
Room 2			
Room 3			
Room 4			
Room 5			
Room 6			
Classrooms—Wing B			
Room 7			
Room 8			
Room 9			
Room 10			
Room 11			
Room 12			
Kindergarten Room A			
Kindergarten Room B			

Figure 2.1. Example of Management by Wandering Around (MBWA) Record

These visits also increase a principal's awareness of each classroom's current activities. This allows for channeling of resources in particular areas. When fliers, pictures, or book samples come across the principal's desk, they can be forwarded to the appropriate classrooms.

MBWA is an excellent example of time management as well. The principal uses precious minutes in a time-efficient way to manage what is important. One principal talked of conducting "one-legged conferences" during her walks about campus. As an example, she cited talking with a custodian about his excellent care of the front lawn and simultaneously requesting that he mow the lawn by the primary wing at a time other than 12:45 when students were doing sustained silent reading. She invited him to participate in the reading program at that time so that students could see him modeling reading as a lifelong skill. Another idea might be to invite the custodian in to talk about how he uses math in his daily work. Cafeteria staff, the nurse, librarians, teachers, parents, and community members could be asked to share how they have applied learnings from schooling.

One of the most troubling and sensitive problems is managing individuals who are not succeeding, whether they are teachers or other school personnel. MBWA increases the principal's awareness of these situations. Unless there is an immediate act that necessitates dismissal, long-term documentation is usually necessary. The principal should take notes as the MBWA visits are made. When this is the case, careful documentation, following legal standards, is essential to collect data that is defensible in court hearings.

Additionally, MBWA can help principals determine whether an employee's poor performance is due to systemic failure or professional inadequacy. One should consider the view of W. Edwards Deming, the management expert, who maintained that systemic failure accounted for up to 85% of employee problems, whereas workers were responsible for only 15% of the problems (Walton, 1986).

Another area of school management is maintaining a litter-free environment. Principals have organized "trash patrols" and other activities to assure an attractive campus. One principal developed a program called "the eagle's eyes." The eagle was the school's mascot. Anytime someone was observed doing something to enhance the campus from picking up litter to planting a tree, they would be acknowledged with a note written on stationery headed with "The eagle's eyes saw . . ." These individuals could be celebrated during assemblies.

Another area of management responsibility is transportation. To end teacher and office confusion about which bus a new student should ride, a Georgia principal makes an alphabetical listing of all streets, subdivisions, and day care centers with the appropriate bus number listed by each entry. The route times might also be listed. A teacher can just look up the student's address by street name on the list and assign the proper bus quickly and accurately.

Often overlooked as management responsibility is the need to keep support personnel informed about student behavior and expectations. Principals find student behavior to be an essential topic, not only for teachers but for parent volunteers, paraprofessionals, and support personnel such as school bus drivers, cafeteria workers, classroom aides, or library personnel. To address this topic, seminars can be planned at which issues related to student behavior are discussed. These seminars might also include motivation and reinforcement theory. When the emphasis is on organizing, teaching, and reinforcing students during the first 3 weeks of school, the staff and support personnel generally report fewer discipline referrals and headaches. Thereafter, attention to behavior should continue with a focus on "catching students being good!" Thus, making sure the school is a safe place for students is another essential management responsibility.

School Emergencies

Each school faces the possibility of an emergency at any time. Weather emergencies may include excessive rain, windstorms, fires, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, or hurricanes. School, medical, or drug emergencies may include kidnapping, shootings, overdose of drugs, traffic accidents, or a tragedy in the community. Every school should have an emergency procedure manual that includes appropriate steps for each type of emergency. Although an emergency procedure manual may be seen as a bureaucratic artifact never to be read, it is a guide that could save lives. If at all possible, develop procedures through the collaboration of the staff, students, administration, and classified and support staff as well as local safety officers. Such collaboration increases the knowledge base and number of personnel able to cope with emergencies. Developmental work of this type also increases ownership for the manual and its contents.

Once developed, the procedures should be taught, modeled, and practiced. Although drills interrupt instructional time, if the school principal is serious about the importance of these events with staff and students, then these emergency preparation procedures can be a useful educational experience. In some schools, teachers have integrated teaching about AIDS, disaster, or emergency preparedness into reading, writing, science, and history classes. Crisis planning teaches a great deal about decision making as well.

Additionally, it is important to establish a public relations spokesperson and a related plan of action so that if an emergency situation occurs, the media will be handled skillfully and rumors curtailed. Many schools have cultivated relationships with key individuals at the local newspaper who might be contacted during emergencies. These communication channels and the related plan of action might be described in the emergency procedures manual as well.

Bringing in key community members involved in emergency work such as firefighters, protective service workers, and trauma unit personnel to speak with students helps to develop a respect for and awareness of the emergency procedures. Furthermore, a strong public relations program with the local police department, including officers speaking in the schools about proactive crime prevention or automobile safety, could later prove very valuable if the police need to be called into the school's vicinity because of an emergency.

It is helpful, also, to provide time for school pupil service teams (e.g., nurses and school counselors) to have regular contact with related community health professionals. Communication between school personnel and community professionals can increase knowledge and significantly inform actions. In the most serious cases, this can lead to valuable coordination regarding potential teenage suicides or gang violence. The contact also keeps school personnel informed about current research to help students who are bulimic or anorexic. Moreover, protective service personnel can offer useful information about child abuse—how to recognize it, how to raise student awareness, and how to work with abused students.

Although very rare, students have died from eating foods with ingredients to which they are extremely allergic. The ultimate tragedy for a family, school, and community is, of course, a child's death. Schools must ensure that they have updated information regarding health, medication, and psychological needs. Those who need to know should be informed. Health and emergency procedure cards should be updated regularly. Key facts such as food allergies or medical/health problems, custody issues, and other important information should be highlighted and communicated to appropriate personnel. This might include the school secretary, nurse, cafeteria workers, and teachers. Many schools offer workshops for teachers, support staff, and administrators to prepare for emergencies. Medical preparedness can include training to cope with shock victims, people having epileptic seizures or who are choking, and those who need CPR. Areas where accidents might occur should be identified and procedures developed to address each possible accident. Obvious locations are playgrounds, cafeterias, or bus stops.

Finally, to be sure all possibilities have been considered, the staff might brainstorm potential emergency situations and design related precautions. An example might look like this:

Possible Situation	*Plan*
Evacuation of building	Evacuation plans taught and practiced, as well as posted on each classroom, library, office, and gym door Busing plans, if appropriate, posted
Shooting on the playground or in the classroom	Locations of phones to dial 911 specified Contact school nurse Evacuation plan implemented Provide counseling for those involved

Planning ahead can pay off dramatically in speeding up effective response and reaction time. When every second counts, it may spell the difference between life and death.

Community

Principals manage the image of the school in the community and the communication flow between school and community by adopting a proactive stance. This can affect greatly the community perception of the school and support for school activities and funding, as well as students' perceptions of parental support for the school. Several examples that follow were shared at a job-alike session held in Washington, DC, for nationally distinguished principals in 1991.

For example, principals can conduct a regular "neighborhood walk and watch." This activity is designed to take the principal into the neighborhood that surrounds the school to talk with community members, spread good news about the school and students, find out about community developments, and lend an interested ear.

One principal organizes a late spring "Dinner on the Grounds." Each class prepares for this event by writing letters of invitation home and to key civic leaders. (Reservations are made to attend this function.) A special assembly is held during the evening in which the school takes the opportunity to highlight its mission and important values by conducting a ceremony in which awards are given for the most improved student, student leadership, good citizenship, and academic excellence. Following the assembly, quilts and blankets are spread out, sack dinners are handed out, and the school band plays.

Many principals enhance the image of the school in the community by joining civic service clubs and regularly reporting on school affairs. In addition, they have met with education editors from the local newspaper and cultivated positive relationships with them.

One principal challenged the president of a large international seed company to trade places with him for a day. This joint get-acquainted venture resulted in a delightful school-business partnership. Scientists and other personnel from the company worked with the teachers to develop a project in which students formed greenhouse companies in their classrooms and produced plants for a Mother's Day plant sale.

Another principal initiated a pen pal program between students of the school and a local submarine unit.

Recognizing the rising costs of feeding families, one school extended a hand to community members by organizing a bulk food purchase. This involved placing large orders for frozen foods to secure a substantial discount for community members.

Still another example of managing the school in the community occurred when the principal and staff of a school in Hawaii realized that many parents of preschoolers had negative school experiences themselves and were therefore reluctant to come to school. So the school decided to go to the community. They set up blankets in a local park and invited the parents to visit. On each blanket was a learning station for parents. Refreshments were provided. This activity demonstrated to the community that the school was approachable and could offer much to them.

In Rockingham County, Virginia, a school's staff volunteered to conduct parent conferences at a local chicken-processing plant where a large number of parents worked. This increased parents' access to the school and greatly enhanced school-community relationships.

Support Services

Societal conditions and increased social service agency cooperation have made support services in the community still another facet of management responsibility for the principal. That is, to serve students, staff, and parents, principals need to know about the community resources available to support the local school. Many principals have begun by making a list of needs and identifying agencies that could provide support. Examples of these might include Big Brothers and Big Sisters organizations, the Community Clothes Closet, the county health department, mental health services, child protective services, the crisis line, the community library, and services for the homeless. Resource files have been established in the office with the name, address, and phone number of each agency. Inside the files might be literature collected during "get acquainted" visits to these organizations. Having well-organized files enables easy access to this information for parents and students in need. During Open House or Back-to-School Night, a directory of information regarding support services can be distributed to parents. This same information may also be provided to students. (For an additional discussion on community-based organizations that assist the school, see chapter 17, "Working With Parents and the Greater Community.")

A Final Observation Regarding School Management

When considering the classroom/school-site, community, and support service management responsibilities of the principal, it is interesting to note that the responsibilities seem to move from the inside of the school (the classroom) to the outside world (support services). Clearly, the classroom, school site, community, and support services are linked, and the principal's ability to successfully take advantage of this linkage will rest to some extent on his or her ability to see the linkage as based on relationships among people, not simply as structural entities that need to remain in communication with one another.

Certainly, leadership and management go hand in hand as the principal manages this responsibility.

Note

1. Principal's voices, primarily from a study (Alvy, 1983) completed between 1980 and 1983 of new principals, will be heard throughout the book.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. Separately, consider several characteristics of effective leaders and several characteristics of effective managers. What conclusions can you draw about management or leadership from your selected characteristics?
2. Why do you think that some leaders have expressed disdain for traditional management responsibilities?
3. Develop a key area checklist for MBWA at your school.
4. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

3

Leader as Shaper of School Culture

> *There is a subtle spirit that can be sensed the moment one walks into a school . . . that subtle spirit is the school culture.*
>
> CALIFORNIA SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Within any organization, there is an "inner reality" (Deal & Peterson, 1993) or culture that influences the way people interact, what they will and will not do, and what they value as "right and rude" (Little, 1982). This inner reality reflects what organizational members care about, what they are willing to spend time doing, what and how they celebrate, and what they talk about. It is evident in daily routines. The inner reality or culture of a school influences its productivity, professional development, leadership practices, and traditions. The same stable culture that brings meaning to a school can also frustrate efforts to implement new, innovative ideas, especially if they are contradictory to the existing culture. Consider, if you will, the open classroom of the 1960s. It soon became walled up because the culture of the one-room schoolhouse was so strong. Hence one understands Fullan and Stiegelbauer's (1991) words "to restructure is not to reculture."

Despite its pervasive nature, culture or inner reality is often overlooked as a critical force. Instruction, curriculum, quality assessment, and leadership surely all contribute to a quality school. But "the inner, unspoken set of values and purposes that weave quality into the daily routine and motivate everyone to do his or her best" (Deal & Peterson, 1993) is equally if not more powerful in moving a school toward achieving a vision of quality. A school's culture is reflective of its organizational members. The culture is the "meaning" individuals create in their world of work. Bennis (1991) has written, "Each employee

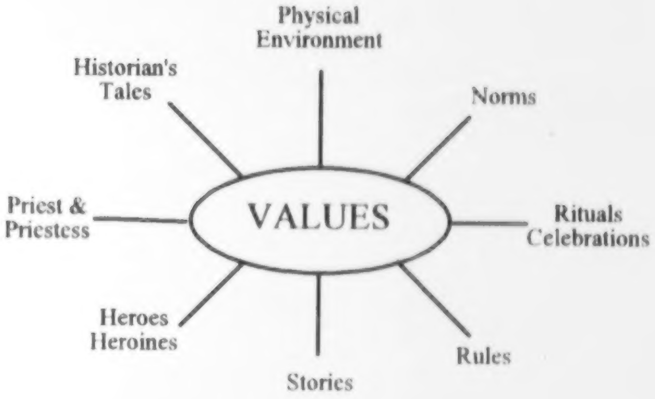


Figure 3.1. Elements of School Culture

is, to a remarkable extent, the organization in miniature" (p. 156). This explains both why culture is such a critical force and how individual interactions influence the culture. Because the way people interact daily or "do business" at a site dramatically influences its ultimate productivity for all members, culture is a powerful school improvement tool. It is not surprising, however, that if a culture is a negative one, it can serve as a hindering force to school improvement efforts. In such cases, the culture must first be studied and then transformed if school improvement efforts are to thrive. This will be discussed later in the chapter. Figure 3.1 illustrates the elements of school culture. All of the elements should reflect the core values and beliefs if the culture is cohesive. In the stories from a variety of schools that follow, you will see how these elements function.

These accounts, which combine practices used successfully in several schools, will demonstrate some of the ways that principals and the staff can use culture as a quality tool for school improvement.

Core Beliefs and Values Are the Heart of Culture

The principal at Lincoln School endeavors to facilitate a learning culture. He believes the leader's role is to provide a facilitating environment that contributes to teacher self-empowerment. In a recent interview, the principal explained that to construct a context within which this can occur, principals should help create a culture that celebrates growth and shared decision making. Teachers need to feel confident and safe. It is very important that regardless of what is taking place outside of the school, the school culture must remain positive and clearly aimed at making the school a better place for students. The culture should emphasize that the school is a community of learners and that all can learn from one another. As one teacher stated, "The belief in teaching [as] a learning experience has enabled me to deal with problems as opportunities for problem solving."

In this setting, risk taking and experimentation, if they are directed toward goals of enhanced learning, are recognized and rewarded. According to Barth (quoted in Sparks, 1993), "to unlock energy and inventiveness, people have to take risks" (p. 18). Teachers, students, and parents are far more likely to take risks when principals frequently and visibly take risks themselves. The willingness of people who inhabit a school to take risks directly influences their capacity to learn. Learning from one's "mistakes"—risk taking—and exploring heretofore undiscovered dimensions of one's competencies can contribute to an environment characterized by teaching and staff collaboration committed to continuous improvement. Moreover, every aspect of the program should emphasize quality, and all personnel should feel professional and personal pride as individuals and as part of the group, from teachers, principals, and aides to lunchroom personnel, custodians, and security guards. Quality should be emphasized in interpersonal relationships, resources, teacher meetings, playground equipment, and the physical condition of the school.

The Physical Environment Reflects Core Values

In a culture where learning, collaboration, and quality are valued, there are visible places where this occurs. The Teachers' Center provides one such example. A key aspect of the center at the Lincoln School is a professional library that includes current journals and professional videos. It is a setting where ideas are exchanged, and books, articles, and lessons are discussed. Teachers find resources there to develop curriculum materials, plan instruction, or assess the impact of curriculum and instruction on students.

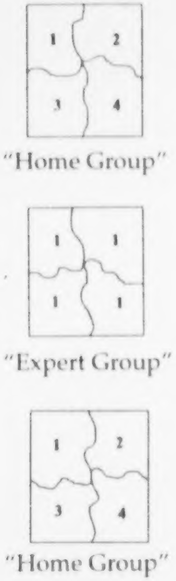
Activities are also in place within the physical environment to remind organizational members of the importance of learning, collaboration, and quality and to provide avenues for such ends. Examples of this might be a schedule for peer coaching or a time when, on a schoolwide basis, everyone reflects through journal writing.

A celebration of student work also reflects core values. This can occur with an "On Showcase" bulletin board. This board highlights the work of different classes every 2 weeks. It is generally in a prominent area of the school, such as on the wall outside of the principal's office. Items for display may include work from a recent unit, a special project emphasizing a school holiday, or an idea being promoted on a schoolwide basis. What is most important is that the display calls attention to student work.

Rituals Display Core Values and Call Attention to What Is Important

There are many rituals in a school. A familiar one is the faculty meeting. In a culture that values learning from one another, the faculty meeting can become a forum for learning. Meetings can be organized to have teachers share ideas that are working in their classrooms. For example, elementary school teachers who are experiencing success with Big Books or publishing student work can show samples and lead a discussion on their successes. If an atmosphere of trust exists, ideas that were not successful can also be shared. The principal can also share successes and failures. Remember, you are promoting the idea of leader as learner. How can one learn without making some mistakes and taking some risks? As a member of one large corporation once stated, "Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently." This also encourages teachers to try lessons that are experimental and demonstrates principal support.

Another activity that can be used to foster learning and model a classroom instructional strategy is the "jigsaw." For example, if staff members are learning about and using cooperative learning in their classrooms, the principal could use the jigsaw cooperative learning activity as part of the format for a faculty meeting. Suppose there are four articles about cooperative learning or approaches to integrating the curriculum that members of a leadership team would like to share as a cooperative activity with the faculty. Staff members could be asked to form "home groups." Within each group, individuals would count off one through four. "Ones" would read article 1, "twos" article 2,



"Home Group"

a. Each reads his or her assigned article, highlighting key points.

"Expert Group"

b. Number-alike groups meet to discuss key points and to decide how to share the article's content with fellow members.

"Home Group"

c. Each group member summarizes what was read.

Figure 3.2. Jigsaw Activity

and so on (see Figure 3.2a). Following this, staff members sharing the same number would meet to become "expert" in the content of the article they read. This would involve discussing key points, identifying helpful examples, and deciding how they would share with others what they read (see Figure 3.2b). Finally, home groups would reconvene, and each member would explain to the others what he or she read (see Figure 3.2c).

At the conclusion of the teaching episodes, groups would synthesize their collective learnings and report to the total group. The principal would function as a group member during the entire jigsaw process.

Many principals have used the jigsaw technique with different types of content. For instance, at the beginning of the year, some have used it to review information contained in the faculty or school handbook. Others have used it to share articles about working with special education students, at-risk students, or effective teaching practices. This strategy celebrates individual accountability and fosters collaboration and interdependence among faculty members. These attributes reflect the values that are being developed and reinforced in the culture.

Another technique that calls attention to learning together is the "listening posts" activity. The faculty meeting facilitator asks the group members to generate possible topics for discussion. These may include such items as working with at-risk youths, integrating the curriculum, or portfolio assessment. Topics for discussion are then posted in different locations of the room. Individuals gather around topics of interest and have a 15- to 20-minute discussion. Each group's ideas are recorded on butcher paper posted around the room. These are often typed and later distributed to the faculty. Following the discussion, each group prepares a 2-minute summary of its conversation and reports. Many times the "reporting out" phase plants seeds of interest among other faculty members. A variation of this activity is the use of classrooms instead of areas of the room as listening posts. This has the added value of getting faculty members into classrooms other than their own.

Another learning ritual is the brown-bag lunch. One staff member at the Lincoln School who attended several cooperative learning workshops shared her experiences with interested staff during lunch. Teachers followed up these sessions by experimenting with cooperative learning techniques in their classrooms. At the final session, teachers decided they wanted to support one another in their cooperative learning activities. As a consequence, they decided to continue meeting once a month at lunch to exchange ideas. The principal supported this activity by publicizing the meetings and by providing logistical support and refreshments.

Celebrations Call Attention to What Is Important

In a community of learners, learning is valued and celebrated publicly. Student recognition assemblies are held every 6 to 8 weeks to celebrate student successes. Students are cited for helping out a new child in class, improving penmanship, making significant academic improvement, or teaching another student. Groups of students are complimented for excellent behavior in the cafeteria or keeping the campus clean. Whatever is celebrated reflects what is being emphasized in the school. Following the assembly, notes are sent home to parents from the principal, informing parents of their child's accomplishments.

Celebrations put the school's values on display. At one school, Martin Luther King Day was celebrated by faculty, parents, and students. First, the principal gave a presentation about what Martin Luther King Jr. stood for. He emphasized values such as the love of fellow human beings, nonviolence, and equal opportunity. Next, he pointed out how these same values were shared by the school and cited specific examples that students could relate to. As an example, the principal asked the students how they would feel if because of their hair color, they had to use separate drinking fountains, bathrooms, and cafeterias. Finally, students and faculty sang songs such as "Lift Every Voice and Sing" and "We Shall Overcome," followed by a video clip of Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech "I Have a Dream." The assembly provided some insight into what it was like to live through the 1960s. When the ceremony was over, many participants had tears in their eyes. One teacher remarked, "As a school, we're closer now, and have a feeling of what we're all about."

It is important to make sure that all programs—even holiday programs—have meaning, relative to what the school is about.

How People Spend Time Reflects Core Values

Charity drives in schools or sending middle or high school students out to volunteer in the community for service credit sends a clear message that the school is concerned about others. Such activities also teach about community service. The December holiday season is an excellent time to have a food, clothing, or toy drive for those in need. The student government can help organize these events, assisted by faculty advisors, so that it becomes a collaborative enterprise.

History reminds people about what an organization has stood for over time. On the 40th anniversary of the American Embassy School in New Delhi, India, a teacher received a stipend to write a history of the school. This has gone a long way to build the idea of tradition. The middle school, on its 40th anniversary, buried a time capsule with a video of the school and samples of schoolwork. The elementary school student council took the lead in renaming two school buildings after famous people who exemplified the values that the school stood for.

A school song to reflect the core values was written by one of the teachers, and there was a student contest to select the title.

The World of AES

To the city of New Delhi
We come from far and wide
Boys and girls of every nation
Standing side by side
In the beauty of the gardens
We learn to take good care
Of ourselves and of each other
And this world that we all share
At AES, AES the finest school we know
Where the boys and girls and grown-ups
All really like to show
That we're smart and clean and friendly
And we lend a helping hand
In this very special school
In a very special land

Each day we try our very best
In everything we do
The school is like a sailing ship
And we are all the crew
We work and play together
As we sail upon the sea
There's no other place in India
That we would rather be than . . .
AES, AES the finest school we know
Where the boys and girls and grown-ups
All really like to show
That we're smart and clean and friendly
And we lend a helping hand
In this very special school
In a very special land

Marilyn Ferguson
Kindergarten teacher (1991-1992)

Norms Are the Unwritten Rules in the Culture

Generally, individuals within an organization behave toward one another according to the expectations they perceive to exist within the culture. These group expectations are usually a function of an unwritten code for behavior called *norms*—or, more simply stated, "The way we do things around here" (personal communication with Terry Deal, San Francisco, 1989).

In some schools, for example, there are norms that reinforce people for voicing their opinions, even if those opinions go against the grain of the majority voice. As one teacher from Maine explained, "At our school, everyone has a right to disagree. No one must voice their opinion. But, if you don't take responsibility for voicing your opinion, and a decision is made by the rest of the staff, you must agree not to stand in the way of the wheels of progress." In schools where this type of norm is strong, individuals who risk offering an opposing viewpoint have often become celebrated as heroes because they make others think about their attitudes and actions. One teacher noted, as an example, "At our school, we can always count on Andy. He has his feet planted firmly in concrete . . . but he reminds us, who often have our heads in the clouds, of brass tacks reality!"

These norms often govern learning opportunities within the culture in addition to traditional activities such as workshops or guest speakers. When norms at a school encourage prospecting for internal resources, the activities reflect that stance. Peer-coaching programs are one such example. At one school, a peer-coaching program has been operating successfully for 3 years. To keep the project ongoing, teachers divide into newcomer and veteran groups. There are strong norms within this culture that emphasize the importance of teaching and learning from one another. When practices such as peer coaching support collegiality and cooperation in this way, they become embedded in the fabric of school life.

When new information or learning opportunities are needed in collegial cultures, the norm has often become "Let's look within our own rich reservoir of talent to see what we might tap." When one school's Staff Development Committee surveyed the teachers about what they were most interested in, it came to light that improving questioning techniques was a major area of interest. The teachers organized some of the homegrown talent to put on a staff workshop. Topics such as Bloom's taxonomy, developing questions and activities that require higher level questions, and using wait time became schoolwide objectives as a result of the workshop.

Stories Communicate and Reinforce Cultural Values

The use of story is one avenue through which new and existing members of a culture are informed about and reminded of its values. Every school has stories that, as a matter of tradition, are passed on to new staff members. Generally, these stories signal important values or beliefs. For example, at one school, new teachers are told about a former teacher who always had special techniques for helping at-risk youths. Through the story, they learn that because the school did not at that time have a forum for staff sharing, when that teacher retired, a library of knowledge "burned." Hence that teacher left her mark on students, but not on the teaching profession. Because of this great loss, teachers at the school now take special care to make sure quality time is set aside for professional dialogue and the sharing of ideas and practices. A ritual called "See Them Teach Before They Leave" is instituted each spring in which returning faculty members are encouraged to visit classrooms of departing teachers. Following this ritual, an assembly is held wherein the bronzed classroom doorknob of the departing teacher, affixed to a wooden plaque and inscribed, is presented to the departing teacher.

In addition to reminding organizational members about important values, stories can also provide a way of talking about issues that hit close to home or are sensitive, with a more comfortable distance. One principal used the following story during the first faculty meeting to remind teachers of the tremendous influence they have on students' lives, beyond the academic arena.

The story is taken from a speech by Sir Winston Churchill before the House of Commons on June 4, 1940.[1]

The Honorable Profession of Teaching

Teddy Stallard certainly qualified as "one of the least." Disinterested in school, he wore musty, wrinkled clothes; his hair was never combed. He was one of those kids in school with a deadpan face, expressionless—sort of a glassy, unfocused stare. When Miss Thompson spoke to Teddy, he would always answer with a "yes" or a "no." Unattractive, unmotivated, and distant, he was just plain hard to like. Even though Miss Thompson said she loved all of the students in her class the same, deep down inside she wasn't being completely truthful.

Whenever she marked Teddy's papers, she got a certain perverse pleasure out of putting Xs next to the wrong answers, and when she put Fs at the top of the papers, she always did it with a flair. She should have known better; she had Teddy's records and she knew more about him than she wanted to admit. The records read

- First grade: Teddy shows promise with his work and attitude but has a poor home situation.
- Second grade: Teddy could do better. His mother is seriously ill. He receives little help at home.
- Third grade: Teddy is a good boy, but much too serious. His mother died this year.
- Fourth grade: Teddy is very slow, but well behaved. His father shows no interest.

Christmas came and the boys and girls in Miss Thompson's class brought her Christmas presents. They piled their presents on her desk and crowded around to watch her open them. Among the presents was one from Teddy Stallard. She was surprised that he had brought her one, but he had. Teddy's gift was wrapped in brown paper and was held together with Scotch™ tape. On the paper were written the simple words, "For Miss Thompson, from Teddy." When she opened Teddy's present, out fell a gaudy rhinestone bracelet, with half of the stones missing, and a bottle of cheap perfume.

The other boys and girls began to giggle and smirk at Teddy's gifts, but Miss Thompson at least had enough sense to silence them by immediately putting on the bracelet and putting some of the perfume on her wrist. Holding her wrist up for the other boys and girls to sniff, she said, "Doesn't it smell lovely?" And the children, taking their cue from their teacher, readily agreed.

At the end of the day, when school was over and the other students had left, Teddy lingered behind. He slowly came over to her desk and said softly, "Miss Thompson . . . Miss Thompson, you smell just like my mother, . . . and her bracelet looks real pretty on you too. I'm glad you liked my presents." When Teddy left, Miss Thompson sobbed.

The next day when the children came to school, they were welcomed by a new Miss Thompson. She had become a different person, a person committed to loving all of her students, especially the slow ones. Especially Teddy Stallard. By the end of that school year, Teddy showed dramatic progress. He had caught up with most of the students and was even ahead of some.

The school year quickly came to an end, and Teddy went on to another school. She didn't hear from Teddy for a long time. Then one day, she received a note that read

> Dear Miss Thompson,
>
> I wanted you to be the first to know. I will be graduating second in my class.
>
> Love,
> Teddy Stallard

Four years later, another note came:

> Dear Miss Thompson,
>
> They just told me I will be graduating first in my class. I wanted you to be the first to know. The university has not been easy, but I liked it.
>
> Love,
> Teddy Stallard

And four years later:

> Dear Miss Thompson,
>
> As of today, I am Theodore Stallard, MD. How about that? I wanted you to be the first to know. I am getting married, the 27th to be exact. I want you to come and sit where my mother would sit if she were alive. You are the only family I have now; Dad died last year.
>
> Love,
> Teddy Stallard

Miss Thompson went to the wedding and sat where Teddy's mother would have sat. She deserved to sit there; she had done something for Teddy that he could never forget.

After telling the story, the principal conducted an activity in which staff members reflected on the legacy that they would like to leave with their students.

Once this story was shared with the staff, they frequently referenced it when speaking with one another; it had become a part of the culture. It became a constant reminder, in this school, about how fragile students are and in what small ways teachers can make big differences in students.

At report card time, the principal reminded the teachers about the Teddy Stallard story. The point was to emphasize how a comment that may at first glance appear to be insignificant may, in fact, have an enduring positive or negative effect on students and parents. A report card manual, prepared for the teachers, was distributed as a guideline to assist in the development of report card comments. The manual began with the following words:

> This manual is made up of report card comments written by you and your colleagues. Often we read manuals that do not apply to our specific situation. This will not be the case with this manual. Different types of comments have been selected to provide you with a variety of ideas and styles for you to review. Overall, the quality of the comments is very impressive. It is easy to take pride in the sensitivity, care, and thoughtfulness that went into the report cards written by our staff.
>
> The comments are divided into primary and intermediate sections and subdivided by subject area and general comments. I've culled through all the report cards so that each comment has a little different angle to offer. Interestingly, as I read through the comments, I recognized that some of the comments from the primary grade teachers have a lot to offer as suggestions to the intermediate grade teachers and vice versa. I would suggest taking an hour to read through the manual, marking comments that you find of interest—that address your class—before beginning report cards this quarter. Of course, thanks to everyone for writing comments that contributed to this project.

After reading hundreds of comments on previous report cards, I would like to make a few nuts-and-bolts suggestions relevant to our specific report card and concerning report card comments in general.

1. Consider relating comments in curriculum areas to specific curriculum issues as related to the child. Mention areas of strength and weaknesses that identify to the parents what is being studied in class. This should be considered, also, when discussing behavior.
2. If you want to make a general point, use the "additional comments" section on the back of the report card instead of the designated subject area section. Mentioning that "Beverly is a pleasure to have in class" or that "Steven is often late to school" should not be the primary point under the math section of the report card. Furthermore, summary comments about the child's overall performance belong, also, in the additional comments section.
3. When discussing a problem, be specific and try to provide recommendations. For example, "Appu is not doing well in social studies and needs to try harder" gives very little guidance. Consider: "Appu's oral presentations in social studies should be organized more carefully. Please consider 'rehearsing' the presentations at home before the classroom presentation. I am sure her work will improve with this effort!"
4. Remember that the report card is a permanent record. Thus every comment should be meaningful: "Juan forgets to date his papers" can be mentioned at a parent conference instead of as part of the language arts comment section.
5. To preserve overall class confidentiality, it is not recommended to state, "Willy has the top math grades in the class." Furthermore, this tends to overemphasize competition.
6. Make sure your report card comment matches the grade. A glowing comment next to a "needs improvement" grade does not really make sense.
7. Comment areas should be used to describe important issues more than the number of assignments missed in a particular subject. Assignments missed is important information, but

it does not tell us very much about how the child is responding to the curriculum.

8. Avoid insensitive comments such as "Jacob is slow."

As you read through the manual note which comments or ideas "strike you" and/or could be helpful in developing appropriate comments about members of your class.

Thanks,
Steve

Report card comments by grade level and subject area were included in the manual following the guidelines. The members of the culture of this school were, in this way, celebrated for their efforts to date and reminded of core values. Schools that share strong beliefs and values related to student outcomes can increase the attention, time, feedback mechanisms, and resources directed toward helping students learn. This occurs because the focus on the student and the quality of student-teacher relationships becomes a part of school's operating procedures, actions, rules, and reward systems.

Thus far, through anecdotal examples, we have discussed a framework of elements for thinking about school culture. In the pages that follow, we will consider how a culture might be transformed, if it is not a positive one, or if it is not in keeping with a school's vision.

Transforming or Shaping a Culture

Effective leadership must be both administrative and cultural in scope (Schein, 1985). Terry Deal and Kent Peterson (1993) suggest that the principal shapes a culture through a variety of means. They believe that it begins with "reading" the existing culture and then progressively moving to actions or behaviors that "mold or reinforce desirable core values and norms."

Reading a culture involves "reconstructing a school's history by listening to the stories of past events, examining artifacts, such as faculty meeting agendas and minutes, reviewing newsletter stories and school goals" (Deal & Peterson, 1993). Prior efforts at school improvement, crises faced by the staff, traditions, and information about the former principal's leadership style also yield valuable data for constructing a profile of the existing culture. Once this information is garnered, the principal, in concert with the staff, identifies specifics related to the vision of a quality school. In keeping with this vision, detailed plans are made to gradually transform the culture so that the rituals, rewards, routine activities, stories, and norms call attention to the values embedded in the new vision. Deal and Peterson (1990), in a series of case studies, noted that principals shaped culture in both formal and informal ways. They identified six major culture-shaping strategies:

1. Developing a sense of what the school should and could be
2. Recruiting and selecting staff whose values fit with the schools
3. Resolving conflicts, disputes, and problems directly as a way of shaping values
4. Communicating values and beliefs in daily routines and behaviors
5. Identifying and articulating stories that communicate shared values
6. Nurturing the traditions, ceremonies, rituals, and symbols that communicate and reinforce the school culture

Georgea Mohlman-Sparks (1983) suggested that when setting out to implement an innovation that would require cultural change, one should first consider the goals of the change effort, then context factors, before deciding on the approach (see Figure 3.3). Implicit in this model is a realization that specific elements of culture could influence and shape the approach taken. If, for example, a school's cultural norms supported privacy and held that problem sharing meant one was "incompetent," these norms must be taken into account before a collaborative workplace could evolve as a goal. Perhaps faculty meetings could involve teachers in problem finding and sharing as an activity in order to erode these previous norms.

What one principal does will differ dramatically from another. One cultural transformation may take a year, whereas another may take 5 years. What is essential is that the principal holds the values and beliefs in focus as he or she conducts daily tasks, and that these

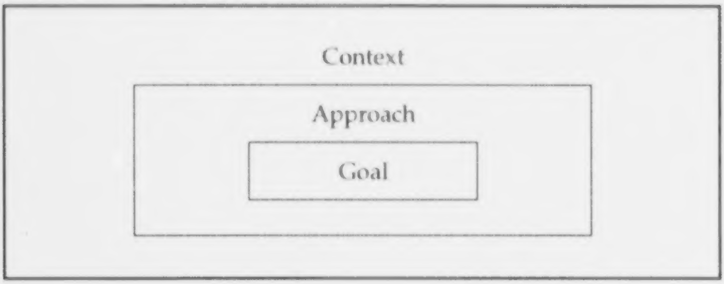


Figure 3.3. A Planning Model

values and beliefs are articulated widely. Continuous growth and improvement must be emphasized.

The following are some questions to ask yourself regarding leadership and culture building (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Schein, 1985):

- What do you pay attention to?
- What do you react strongly to?
- What do you model, teach, and coach?
- How do you allocate rewards?
- What criteria do you use to recruit, select, and excommunicate teachers?
- What ceremonies, rituals, and traditions reinforce your vision?
- Who are the heroes and heroines of your school?
- What stories do you tell of the successes and accomplishments of the faculty and students?
- What school symbols communicate your vision?

You might also ask, "When do I have meetings?" "What items have priority placement on the agenda?" "How is time spent?" "Where are the meetings held?" "Is humor and smiling a ritual of daily life?" Each answer provides valuable data about the culture. For change to be effective, the "change masters"—whether they be the principal, teachers, students, or parents—must first sincerely examine the ceremonies, rituals, norms, values, stories, and traditions of the culture. Then culture-shaping techniques should be used to help the organizational culture reflect desired core values.

Note

1. The authors thank Tim Hansen, Director of the American School in Abu Dhabi, for sharing this story.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. Reflect on the school culture in your organization. What are the core values and beliefs? How are they depicted in traditional ceremonies, rituals, reward structures, artifacts, and stories? Are they consistent with the vision of the school? Why or why not?
2. Are there traditions or rituals in your school that are contrary to the values of the school? Why do you think this is the case? How might you transform them if need be?
3. Identify key "behind the scenes" staff members who play a major part in the school culture. What parts do they play?
4. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

PART II

CRITICAL SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

4

The Art of Human Relations: Getting the Job Done

You must be able to deal with people and communicate with them, or just bag it . . . that's the crux of the whole thing.

A PRINCIPAL'S VOICE

Displaying effective human relations is a key to leadership on every level. It is a thread that runs throughout the organization and affects the culture, climate, personnel practices, and every individual who has contact with the school.

Human relations skills include working with people, building trust, creating a climate for teachers to comfortably discuss their own classroom practice, and helping individuals reach their potential. When positive human relations skills are manifested, people feel comfortable in taking risks, experimenting, collaborating, and communicating ideas and feelings; these behaviors can enable students and staff to perform at a higher level.

Task and Relationship Behaviors

One of the difficult aspects of the principal's human relations role is that task and relationship behaviors must be balanced simultaneously. If too much weight is placed on task behaviors as a measure of success, organizational members may feel stressed or pressured. If too much emphasis is placed on relationship behaviors, people may feel as if "it's all fluff, and no progress is being made." It can be helpful to reflect on key routine events—faculty meetings, newsletters, daily bulletins and announcements, meetings with the staff—and consider in planning for these how you might balance task and relationship behaviors. For example, one principal plans faculty meetings with a principal's advisory committee made up of teachers. This allows him to sense the attitudes of the staff toward key issues on the agenda. The agenda is constructed with time allocations for each item. It is distributed to the staff ahead of time so that items might be added prior to the meeting. During the meeting, in between every few agenda items, drawings are held or joke swapping is conducted for a brief period of time. On items that require staff input, table group discussions occur and collective group summaries are shared. At the very end of the meeting, feedback is requested. In these ways, attention to both task and relationship behaviors is modeled.

One principal brainstormed a list of things she could do to balance attention to task—getting the job done—with relationship-oriented behavior—taking care of people. Elements of this list follow.

Task Orientation	*Relationship Orientation*
Begin meetings on time. End meetings on time.	Allocate time for congenial activities.
When you ask for behavior change or products, give concrete examples of what you expect.	Plan interactive activities during faculty meetings. Protect faculty members from attack when ideas are discussed.
Request feedback on agenda construction and coverage at the end of meetings.	Ask for input regarding decisions to be made; schedule time for discussion.
Take written notes on requests and follow up.	Schedule time for faculty members to work together (sharing ideas, trading lessons, integrating curriculum, developing curriculum, teaching one another instructional approaches).
Assign time limitations to agenda items. If additional discussion time is needed, request time from the faculty or permission to continue the discussion at the next meeting.	Follow up staff development experiences with opportunities for staff members to share how they have applied recent learnings.

Differentiated Growth

As well as balancing the task and relationship roles, effective human relations skills include sensitivity to the individual needs of personnel. For example, teachers new to the profession may need very directive support as they struggle and triumph in the early stages of their careers. This assistance may begin with a tour of the school and a review of basic policies and procedures, with time to ask questions. Additional support can be provided through a variety of sources: the principal, a group of teachers, a mentor or lead teacher, or a combination of approaches. Support might include consultation, modeling, feedback, and opportunities to visit other teachers or to talk with trusted colleagues.

Successful experienced teachers, on the other hand, may prefer reflective listening and coaching as opposed to directive support. The provision of opportunities to work on professional growth topics with colleagues may be a stimulating aspect of the support provided to this type of individual. (Refer to chapter 10, "Maximizing Feedback About Teaching: Differentiated Professional Growth Options," for an extensive discussion about collegial support.)

Mind Styles

A principal's human relations skills may be enhanced by considering the impact of a staff member's "mind style" (Gregorc, 1985). School leaders would benefit from examining the literature on style and applying the lessons appropriately. For example, Gregorc identifies four basic mind or learning styles that affect how individuals think, what they value, and how they behave. The four styles reveal preferences for ordering information and perceiving information. Ordering preferences range from sequential to random. Perception preferences range from concrete to abstract. Thus a principal who, because of style, relates and perceives in an organized, concrete manner may have difficulty communicating with a staff member who operates through a more abstract, random approach. (Providing a workshop on style can be a lively, informative, and enjoyable staff development activity.)

"Style" represents one tool to enhance relationships among staff members. In addition, success in human relations may result as a consequence of interpreting how individuals are affected by the context of a particular situation and acting appropriately.

Recommendations for Skillful Human Relations

Following are some commonsense suggestions that should be considered as principals work to help the staff and students reach their highest levels of performance. These recommendations emerged as a result of observing and talking with many principals.

1. *Project yourself as a person first, principal second.* Show your human side. Let the staff know that you are approachable and genuine. This helps colleagues feel that they too can be themselves. When you show your "rough edges," it gives people permission to show theirs, and authentic relationships have a chance to flourish. The pressure of always doing the right thing becomes less of an expectation. In a sense, the leader is saying, "We are all humans, we make mistakes, and through our humanness, we learn."
2. *Be consistent about what matters.* Consistency on the part of a leader is a great asset if the leader's words and actions are communicating the important values of the school. Furthermore, matching actions with words helps create credibility and provides the staff with a sense of security about what can be expected of the principal. Also, trust builds when the staff knows what to expect—what can be predicted—in the principal's actions.
3. *Never lose sight of the vision and your role in fostering the vision.* Maintaining a focus on the vision while working with teachers, students, and parents in the workplace allows one to stay on course and create positive attitudes and perceptions among others in the workplace. Focus on the people side while working on the vision.
4. *Take time to look at people; smile, respond, and laugh.* Taking time to interact sincerely, with a smile or meaningful "hello," shows others that you care. Moreover, the nonverbal gestures that you make, and respond to, really count. Your ability to "read" nonverbals can make the difference in communicating effectively with a staff member. The message may not always be obvious, but it is still there to be received.

5. *Use active listening so people sense that you are really listening and that you do care.* Active listening demonstrates that you are hearing what is being communicated. People are more likely to be motivated when they feel heard and understood. In addition, active listening tells the speaker that his or her time is also important and that a full explanation is welcome and can benefit the principal's understanding. Active listening usually includes asking clarifying questions to enhance understanding. Unfortunately, we often listen only to respond, to speak. We think that what we have to say is more important than the contribution of another.

6. *Dignify people and take the high road.* When you look for the best in people and communicate by dignifying them, you can expect that the best will come back to you. Additionally, dignifying people includes taking the high road in all relationships. If you embarrass or insult someone, it is difficult to build bridges, and you will likely regret your actions later. Dignifying people shows respect, which can foster trust, and trust is your most valuable ally in building a learning organization.

7. *Walk a mile in your colleague's moccasins.* Taking another person's perspective often reveals insights that we would not otherwise be privy to. This gives us a greater appreciation of the other's needs, viewpoints, and, possibly, an inside view of what that person considers when making important decisions. This can provide a measure of empathy as well. The ability to empathize is one of our most sophisticated and valuable human characteristics. Also, appreciating another's point of view enhances our capacity to fine-tune communication because of greater understanding.

8. *Respect and nurture diversity. Diversity brings richness to a school.* Encouraging and nurturing the diverse ideas of individuals can tap a new level of creativity that enables the staff to collectively face challenges. Diversity can enable the leader to see with many different eyes. This enhances one's overall perspective. Moreover, the person who might not share the principal's viewpoint, or the viewpoint of the majority, may be offering an important idea or thought that has been overlooked.

9. *Be accessible, open, and supportive.* People have a need to connect with one another, especially during the change process when many people feel lost, needy, incompetent, vulnerable, and out of control.

Be there for them. Support can help individuals make the transition from old to new practices. Support entails listening, problem solving, reflecting, clarifying, and helping people develop workable solutions.

10. *Take time to smell—and water—the roses.* One superintendent took 5 minutes to play catch with a lonely boy, and 2 months later learned it meant a great deal to the student. A principal walked into a small class of students receiving special assistance and asked a boy, "Jonathan, how are you doing?" Later, the principal was told that after he left, the child smiled at the teacher and said, "Wow, the principal knows my name!" Remember that in small ways we can make a big difference in people's lives.

The following Chinese characters for *ear, eyes, you, undivided attention,* and *heart,* when combined, make up the verb *to listen* and remind us of critical components necessary for effective human relations. You may want to post this symbol near your desk.

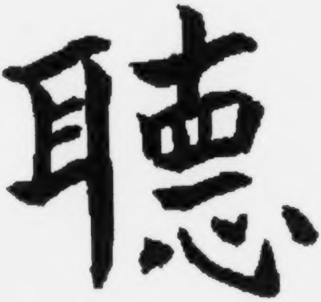


Figure 4.1.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. What other "Recommendations for Skillful Human Relations" would you add to the list?
2. List things you do that have a task focus. Then, make a list of things you do that have a relationship focus. State what you do to simultaneously "get the job done" and "take care of people."
3. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

5

Managing Time

What you pay attention to, and spend time on, communicates what you value.

KENT PETERSON (personal communication, July, 1991)

Time is the one resource we all share. However, what we choose to do within the time we have, how we actually spend our time, differs widely across individuals. No one actually "manages time." However, we can manage our use of time by clearly identifying our personal and professional goals and scheduling our time to reflect that. Easier said than done! In a study of time use among new principals, a major discrepancy was apparent between the actual and desired time that principals wanted to spend in the areas of curriculum and instruction. These principals were very dissatisfied with the amount of time they were able to spend on curriculum and instruction versus such items as pupil problems and facility management (Alvy, 1983).

Brevity, Fragmentation, and Variety

Part of the difficulty associated with the principal's efficient use of time lies in the characteristics of principals' work lives. Peterson (1982), in a study of principals' work, noted three attributes of their work lives: brevity, fragmentation, and variety (Mintzberg, 1973). For example, related to brevity, he found that 85% of the principals' tasks lasted 9 minutes or less. Often there was a sense of fragmentation related to the work because frequently the principal was interrupted by forces over which she or he had no control, and often these interruptions were unexpected. Furthermore, in examining the nature of the tasks, there was tremendous variety. This variety demanded a wide range of emotions and technical skills, some for which the administrator had no previous experience or preparation.

Together these attributes of principals' work, from one perspective, make the planned work very difficult to get done. But from another perspective, the brevity, fragmentation, and variety present an opportunity to work effectively. As an example, when taking your morning walk through classrooms (an important professional goal), you may be interrupted by a parent who is picking up makeup work for a sick child. This brief encounter presents the principal with an opportunity to express concern for the child and share the purpose of the morning walk through classrooms. This simultaneously communicates the principal's interest in students and the school's commitment to instructional excellence. As you continue your walking, you collect information about the school culture and the classroom climate of individual classes. So, in a sense, the brevity, fragmentation, and variety often allow you to do two or more things at once.

Time Study Strategy

Due to these attributes of the principal's work life, principals must work hard to take control of their use of time, or circumstances will control them. The first step to the effective management of the use of time is to decide what is important professionally and personally through a time study. (Additional time management suggestions may be found in chapter 16.) For example, professional items of importance might include spending time in classrooms and on the playground, giving feedback, developing and conducting professional growth activities, and professional reading. Personal items of importance might include time with family; time for tennis, jogging, golf, or basketball; and time to weave, knit, putter, or read. After the lists of important things are made, think about other "mundane tasks" that you may not value but are required of you given your role. Create a list of these. Although these may seem mundane, ignoring them can lead to potential problems. For instance, this list might include reviewing student attendance records or fire drill procedures, or inspecting buses for possible safety hazards.

Then create three to four personal and three to four professional goals. Think about the activities associated with each. For instance, activities associated with a goal of spending quality family time might include a family game night, going to dinner, having discussions, reading together, or building something.

After your goals are developed, put them aside temporarily, and conduct a study of your use of time. Do this for 2 weeks. You may choose to do this reflectively, at the end of each day, or as you move from task to task. Some principals have used a minicassette recorder because it seemed easier than writing down each task. Another option is to look back at your calendar for the previous month. Note how you spent time. When your time study is complete, review your use of time against your goals. Try highlighting, with a marker, those events, tasks, or activities that relate to your goals. Looking for a match in this way will help you determine if you are spending time in accordance with your priorities. Now take out your list of "mundane tasks." How much time are you spending on these tasks? Carefully analyzing your use of time in this way will help you determine what you want to do more of and what you want to do less of.

Techniques for Time Management

One principal remarked, "It is important to take control of one's schedule. That means long-range scheduling. If you think something is important—like visiting classrooms—build it into your schedule. That's the only way it will happen. Take care of yourself, and don't shortchange yourself on personal goals. I know that may seem selfish, but if your personal life is 'together,' it will help your professional life."

Another principal remarked, regarding scheduling time, "If you don't build what's important to you into the schedule, it will never get done . . . because unimportant events always are there to fill the void. Everyone wants a piece of the principal's time, but if the slices are too small, then you can't taste the accomplishments!"

Many time management consultants have developed models to help us reflect on which responsibilities/tasks are essential and nonessential and to determine which tasks should receive our immediate attention and yet often wait on the back burner (see, e.g., Covey, 1989). Unfortunately, important activities such as long-range planning, building relationships, reflection, and self-renewal often receive little or no attention because of responsibilities that press one's time. To illustrate further, daily interruptions that are difficult to avoid (e.g., telephone calls, drop-in sales visits, some administrative meetings) frequently overshadow essential responsibilities to the organization and oneself (e.g., visiting students on the field or in the classroom, talking with teachers, or reading a professional journal).

Many principals have pointed to the importance of reflecting about the effectiveness of daily work routines to determine whether they actually help get things done in a time-efficient way or if their use tends to inhibit creative abilities. By abandoning or altering a routine, a principal will be presented with an opportunity to approach a familiar task in a new way and in doing so, possibly become more productive.

All of us probably have recognized that our performance tends to peak at certain times during the day. Some refer to themselves as "morning people." Others jokingly remark, "Don't even ask me to think before 10:00 a.m.!" There is a note of seriousness in all this talk. Sensitivity to one's most creative or best "thinking" time can help you schedule those tasks that require the greatest concentration at times when your performance is optimal. Of course, this will not always be possible. To support your plan for the effective use of time, communicate your priorities and philosophy to the secretary and the staff. This can enable them to assist and support you in sheltering peak performance time as well as provide a model for them. It might be appropriate to provide examples of how you would like the secretary to respond (e.g., Mr. Smith is visiting classrooms now, may I schedule an appointment or have him call you back?).

Furthermore, principals must be sensitive to the demands of the day, week, or year that constrain the time of others in the organization. When scheduling personal appointments and all-school activities, principals need to consider how time can be most effectively used to acknowledge the important role that others play in the organization and to send the message that time does not "revolve" around the principal. For example, personally asking a teacher about the best time to schedule a professional appointment, or directing the secretary to do the same, can go along way in setting the proper tone for the appointment. In one school, no faculty meetings are held on Friday at the request of teachers, so they can take care of pressing professional needs before the weekend.

One final thought—when your behavior aligns with your values and beliefs, you will feel comfortable with yourself, your colleagues, and your environment. Professionally, you will feel better about your day because you will know that you have made every minute count.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. Think about your goals. Conduct a time study.
2. Is your use of time aligned with your goals? Are any changes necessary?
3. When are your peak performance times? What do you usually do during these times?
4. What are some effective use-of-time strategies that you can implement on the job?
5. Would you read a professional journal article during the school day? (Why or why not?)
6. Who needs to be aware of your goals in relation to time? How will you let them know?
7. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

6

Effectively Working With the Central Office: Forging Success Through Cooperation

What I learned is that it's easier to ask for forgiveness than for permission.

A PRINCIPAL'S VOICE

Schools do not operate in isolation but as part of a school district with a broad philosophy and set of goals and values emanating from the central office (Gorton, 1980). Reality tells us that a strong relationship between the school and the central office is necessary to implement any major change over a sustained period. It is not enough for a school to desire the change even if all the key human resources are in place at the school site. Funding and resources must be available and the central office can supply both. At a minimum, successful change will necessitate the availability of the following elements: inservice training, funding, and instructional resources for students and teachers. In fact, Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) have noted that "individual schools can become highly innovative for a short period of time without the district, but they cannot stay innovative without district action to establish the conditions for continuous and long term improvement" (p. 209).

Caught in the Middle

Principals often find themselves caught in the middle between staff and the central office. There is a need to follow district guidelines, policies, procedures, and time lines while accomplishing the business of the school. This often involves sheltering teachers from outside interferences. A first step for a principal to help teachers then, is to find out how the district is structured or governed so the principal can represent the needs of the school.

How Is the School District Governed?

Understanding governance can considerably enhance a principal's work life. Initially, principals must recognize that the relationship between a school and the central office will depend to a great extent on the structure of governance and size of the district. Developing effective strategies to work with the central office will depend on understanding how the district works. Concerning governance, there are many traditional and experimental decision-making models. For example, in one school district, the school may be largely autonomous with control of the purse strings in the hands of a site-based counsel that includes a principal, parents, teachers, and community members. Another district may still make critical decisions in the central office with little input from the school site. What about the role of the elected school board? In most districts, school board members see their roles as supporting and fine-tuning the broad policies of the district. Yet in other districts, board members are involved in the nuts-and-bolts activities of the central office and individual schools.

Communication Between the School and the Central Office

Although gaining an understanding of the governance structure is important, a lot will depend on the personnel in the central office and the school and their mutual ability to communicate with each other. Communication should be a two-way street, and the school principal can be the key to orchestrating an effective relationship with the central office. Certainly, the central office views the principal as the primary contact person. Thus, from a practical viewpoint, it is easiest for a district office to say, "We need to get in touch with the Carver School; let's call the principal, Ms. Breyer." But the principal should not expect that it is the job of central office personnel always to initiate the contact. The principal's attitude must be "It is my job to communicate proactively with the central office." Otherwise, the principal may hear from the central office only when something is wrong or when they have a new idea to be implemented without school input.

How can principals effectively initiate contact with the central office? Traditionally, central office personnel do not spend as much time in schools as they would like. Principals need to build occasions into the school calendar to bring central office personnel and school board members into schools. Invite them to major programs, and let them know when Invention Week or the Science Exhibition is taking place, or when the middle school is performing a play. Send them the dates of important events well in advance. Acknowledge their presence when they attend these events. Bring students to the central office to perform and to share their reports or math investigations. Bring or send videos to the central office so they see the kinds of activities taking place in the school.

Also, principals need to ask the district about key meetings and about new ideas that are developing. They should either ask to attend the meetings themselves or have a school representative attend who has both expertise and practical knowledge in the area. Furthermore, if a principal brings an important idea to a central office meeting, he or she will obviously have much more clout at the meeting if the idea emanated from, and has the support of, teachers.

Communication also depends on knowing how the informal organization works (e.g., how things really get done). Fair or unfair, the image of a central office is often one of a bureaucracy that moves slowly and is dominated by red tape. How does one cut the time and red tape necessary to communicate an idea or jump-start a potentially rich innovation? As in other areas, school principals need to find out Whom should you really speak with? Who are the power brokers in the central office? and Who "hangs together"? The idea is not to "beat the system" but rather to institute effective programs for kids and teachers as quickly as possible. Getting in touch with veteran principals or others who have worked in the school district for a long time can be the best way to find out how the informal organization operates.

School leaders also must develop ways to slow down or eliminate an idea from the central office that may offer little prospect for success to the children. Deal and Peterson (1994), in their book *The Leadership Paradox*, talk about the "bifocal principal" who needs to follow the "central office directives (yet) be creatively insubordinate" (p. 49). Also, principals should recognize that central office personnel are doing the same thing. The art of politely resisting an idea and hoping that it will go away is practiced on many fronts. This jockeying on the part of the school and the central office can be frustrating but also helpful, as it keeps both sides on their toes.

It is important, also, to build a relationship of mutual trust in which successes and failures are shared. Acknowledging failures may sound a little dangerous, but the alternative is to worry always about hiding mistakes. That makes for an unhealthy relationship. Additionally, principals are bombarded constantly with new ideas and innovations. Developing a strong relationship based on trust is critical to responding honestly when an idea emerges. If a principal is unable to express skepticism or a lack of knowledge about an innovation (e.g., What is alternative assessment anyway?), it can be a very long, uncomfortable, and superficial relationship.

Finally, when the central office does bring in a new idea of worth, or provides the support for a school-generated idea that is implemented successfully, it is the responsibility of the school leader to acknowledge the role played by the central office. The central office needs to know that they are valued by the school site and that they play an important role. Their efforts deserve to be validated. Central office personnel may not verbalize the idea, but they too often feel distant from a school. When a school reaches out and recognizes the role of the central office, that act can greatly reduce the distance. Thus, invite central office personnel to the key ceremonies that celebrate an innovation. They will remember this. The next time an idea develops from a school in which a warm and effective relationship has been forged, implementation of a change just may come a little easier.

Management Tips for Working With the Central Office

Based on the preceding ideas, the following tips gleaned from successful principals can be helpful in working with the central office:

1. *Request an activities calendar* with key events identified by the district several months before a new year begins. Post the appropriate dates in your office, on your calendar, and in the staff room. Ask the secretary to place the dates on her calendar. Color code events and dates that will affect the school. Keep these in mind when planning school-level events. One principal developed such a time line of events on butcher paper sheets in the staff room. Another developed a computer program so new information could be added and the data used for planning.

2. *Get a hanging file box for your desk.* Establish folders for district-level events by date. As you collect information or ideas for these, simply drop them in the appropriate file.
3. *Plan ahead, but expect surprises.* One has to assume that unexpected events will pop up and drain energy away from other planned efforts. Although one should plan ahead, the plan will not be foolproof. The principalship is filled with unanticipated events.
4. *Keep the district informed.* Several principals send weekly memos containing information about happenings at the school, illustrated with student art work, to the central office. Send copies of communications that the central office may ultimately need.
5. *Invite central office personnel* to celebrations, assemblies, and other rituals of the school (as discussed earlier in the chapter).
6. *Read memos from the district carefully,* using highlighters. Save them in a binder for 1 to 2 years. You never know when you will need them again! Share appropriate ones with building grade-level teams or in the newsletter or bulletin.
7. *Make presentations to the board of education* to keep them informed about school-level activities. (If this concept is valued! In some systems, it may not be.)
8. If the central office makes curriculum decisions that affect the local school, *try to ensure that school-level personnel have representation on the district committees.*

Managing in these ways affords the principal an opportunity to stay visible and keenly aware of what is taking place in the school, the district, and the community. This ability to "keep a finger on the pulse of the organization" is a key skill of the effective manager. In addition, these management actions and interactions will provide the school with significant information to make effective decisions. Leadership decisions will more likely be sound, and the leadership will feel more confident in making them when they are based on information gathered while "out and about," managing the school.

Management and Restructuring

Recognizing that the needs of individual schools vary, many districts are restructuring. The implications of this are profound. For instance, financial and management functions are being delegated to individual schools.

The restructuring movement has produced an increased need for training to enable school-level personnel to effectively take on the management function at the local site. A related consequence of more individuals being involved in site-level decisions and management is the impact on the school principal of delegating. Some principals are quite comfortable with delegation; others are not. For some, the notion of taking ultimate responsibility for decisions and/or growing up with models of "principal-in-charge" make the concept of sharing leadership and management tasks difficult to embrace emotionally or philosophically. In Maine, many staffs and principals have found it useful to generate lists of leadership and management decisions to be made. After each item, a notation is made indicating which parties might be involved in that particular decision and what type of input they might have (e.g., be consulted, provide input, make the decision). In this way, a principal can reserve those decisions that would be uncomfortable to share with others for himself or herself. Interestingly enough, many staffs that have taken on shared management and leadership responsibilities report taking these so seriously that they have revisited a decision three to four times before acting on it. Whether management is shared or not, keeping a simple log of the decisions that are made can be helpful for future reference.

Maintaining a Strong Relationship Between the Central Office and the School

The tug-of-war between the school site and central office is not new. Although it remains to be seen if this trend toward greater local school autonomy will give principals, teachers, and parents the power they need to improve the quality of education, it does make sense that those closest to the client often have the most relevant data on which to base decisions. However, thinking about the relationship should remind us that the central office and the school need each other. As noted earlier, the central office can provide numerous resources to a school. The resources can include disseminating important educational research and sharing pupil data for the schools; helping with the hiring of administrators, teachers, and support staff; and setting policy for the district and schools, including how site-based management should be implemented. Furthermore, the district can serve to link the ideas of the various schools—to keep the schools in touch with one another, very similar to the role played by those organizing a consortium. And the school site can offer the district answers to questions about what is working and what is not. The school site is, of course, the laboratory in which important decisions can be judged as being on the right track or needing further work. We often lament in education about the fragmentation of the curriculum and how we need to integrate more. The same point can be made regarding schools in a district. Too much fragmentation of information among schools within a district can easily lead to the weakening of human and resource relationships so necessary in a learning community.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. How is your school district governed? What are the organizational and individual sources of influence that need to be addressed to implement change?
2. How would you characterize your school's relationship with the central office? What are some strengths and weaknesses? Are there particular things you would like to change?
3. What are your views on site-based management? Central office "dominance"?
4. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

PART III

HONORING THE SCHOOL'S MEANING

7

Understanding, Planning, and Implementing Change

> *We rarely recognize that changes in the nature of work also create losses that trigger powerful individual or collective reactions. The costs may not be immediately obvious nor reflected directly in tangible ways, but left unattended over time, pressure builds up and can become a silent killer in organizations—much like hypertension in the human body. The unresolved loss of title or office can cause personal maladjustments, such as depression or excessive drinking; the substitution of a computerized system for manual procedures can create uncertainty, confusion, and a loss of identity. Wholesale changes in an organization can dramatically affect overall morale, productivity, and turnover. Most often, however, we fail to link these effects to the real cause. We attribute the blame to personal or other intangible sources, rather than to changes in the work setting.*
>
> DEAL (1985, pp. 293-294)

Change Brings Loss and Resistance

The downside of change so eloquently described by Terry Deal is often neglected when we present teachers with ideas that "must" be implemented. Yet one's individual enthusiasm for the change may be quite tempered by the experiences of other faculty. Staff experiencing change may feel loss and insecurity and show resistance and confrontation. In fact, these behaviors should occur. Resistance, in particular, should be expected and can be very helpful in straightening out the change process and improving the process. Resistance will bring questioning and the need to examine the direction of the changes being implemented. In the end, if real change is to occur, organizational members must feel that the change has been effective and meaningful for them.

Influencing Individuals and the Institution

It is critical that we go about change in a way that shows sensitivity to individuals affected by change and the institution that is transformed as a result of change. Thus the purpose of this chapter is to review significant aspects of change from an individual and organizational perspective to enhance the prospects for successful change to occur. The ideas discussed offer the best of what we know from research and practice to equip practitioners with basic information to develop thoughtful plans of action.

Initially and throughout the process, it is important to view change simultaneously from both an individual and institutional perspective. That is, it is important to see the trees and forest at the same time. Change takes place one individual at a time but, if effective, positively affects the whole organization.

With this view in mind, the chapter will begin by providing ideas to create a trusting environment—the first necessary step to implement effective change. The chapter will then examine basic assumptions about the change process, review research-based stages that an institution should go through when implementing change, provide a meaningful framework to build individual support for change, and discuss levels of concern that individuals may experience when implementing change.

Principals should recognize the tremendous role they can play as change facilitators or obstructors. "Throughout our years of research and experience, we have never seen a situation in which the principal was not a significant factor in the efforts of schools to improve" (Hall & Hord, 1987, p. 1). Principals can contribute to educational change as they are acutely involved in the culture and structure of the school (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). For example, principals can make or break a school's effort to foster collaborative decision making or engage in a schoolwide professional development activity. A principal's willingness to listen and set up collaborative teams during faculty and parent meetings indicates a desire to share decisions and engage in change. Furthermore, if teachers indicate an interest in a professional development activity, such as peer coaching, the principal sends a clear message of support or opposition by how he or she responds to the initial idea and facilitates or obstructs the project. In both subtle ways—such as where an item is placed on an agenda—and grand, explicit ways, a principal's actions influence change. Also, Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) remind us that change and progress do not always go hand in hand. In fact, rejecting change may be a bolder move for a school principal than pursuing what appears to be a "quick fix" solution.

Building Trust for Successful Change

Because change is holistic, every aspect of the organizational system has the potential to be affected. This underscores the importance of systemic thinking: that is, that changes in one part of the system have an impact on others. For instance, new graduation requirements or longer class periods may have profound effects on curriculum and teaching practices. Principals have a key role in preparing an environment where potential change initiatives can be rigorously examined by all staff members and, if appropriate, implemented.

One major factor in creating an environment for change is building a climate of trust where risk taking and experimentation can occur. This is easier said than done, especially in cases where previously the norms in the building emphasized "playing it safe." Nonetheless, because change involves new ideas, new behaviors, new materials, and new ways of operating, people need a safe environment to feel comfortable embarking on a change journey. When implementing new ways of doing things, an individual's performance often gets worse before it gets better. We all have experienced this when learning a new move in a familiar sport, for example. Fullan and Miles (1992) describe this experience as the implementation dip: "Even in cases where reform eventually succeeds, things often go wrong before they go right" (p. 749). Therefore, trust—between individuals and within the culture of the school—is an essential ingredient in the change process.

In many change efforts, because the innovation required new forms of working relationships (e.g., site-based management, interdisciplinary units) among individuals, there has been so much of a focus on building relationships versus focusing on a specific end, such as achievement, that performance actually decreased initially (Robbins, 1991a).

Conflict Can Contribute to Positive Change

The environment must permit individuals to take risks and express different points of view. At Ford Motor Company, employees often comment, "Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently." Hence failure becomes a source of knowledge. In the same way that failure comes to be viewed positively, the emergence of conflicting viewpoints often associated with a change effort can be positive as well. When different points of view are voiced, conflict often emerges along with lots of energy. This can actually fuel a positive change effort if it is harnessed to provide a function rather than be swept under the carpet or viewed as a negative. The function conflict provides is raising an awareness of some aspect of the change that had not been considered before. This may have an important influence on implementation of an innovation. In one school's change effort to move to grade-level teams, staff members had not considered the impact of teaming on specialists' positions. Conflict provided a source of knowledge that revealed a blind spot in the planning for teams. An important quality of the expression of conflicting viewpoints is that there needs to be an orientation toward resolution rather than merely expressing a gripe. Conflicting ideas should be welcomed as providing valuable sources of information and insight to assist in planning for change or enhancing a change effort once it is begun. It has been said that if a change is "deep enough," it should be accompanied by conflict because it upsets the status quo.

Finally, another reason to accept conflict is that it brings differences of opinion out in the open. More damage is done when saboteurs operate beneath the surface through covert interactions to obstruct change efforts. This approach uses the unofficial or informal communication network in the school—the system through which information travels faster than the speed of any written memo (and holds more credibility!).

Strategies to Promote Trust

Because risk taking, experimentation, and voicing conflicting opinions are essential ingredients for change and because they thrive in a safe, trusting environment, attending to how to create such an atmosphere for change is an important first step. Yet this step can bring good or bad news. The bad news is that there is no recipe for successful change. However, that is also good news because it provides the opportunity to create a plan of action tailored to one's school. How change and trust building will be addressed at a school site depends on such issues as a school's history, staff turnover, relationships among staff members, schedules and logistics, and degree of community support.

The following menu of options can help build trust:

1. *"Walk your talk."* When one's words and actions are consistently aligned, credibility will usually follow. When one is credible, it is easier to believe in that person as a leader.
2. *Lead by personal example.* Leading by personal example provides an impetus for others to follow. To illustrate, when one demonstrates trust in others, trusting behaviors become an essential thread to build relationships in which one can feel the confidence and trust extended by the school leader.
3. *Encourage people to talk about what it means to be trustworthy.* A simple activity that one can conduct at a faculty meeting is to ask individual staff members to list 10 behaviors that contribute to one being perceived as trustworthy. Then groups of staff members get together, share their individual lists, and come to consensus regarding their top three items. Groups then report their top three. The important attribute of this activity is that people have spent time talking about what contributes to trust. How you spend time communicates what you value.
4. *Invite staff members to have input into collectively determining what the change will be and how it will be implemented.* Adults have a rich reservoir of experiences that begs to be tapped. Moreover, adults like to have a sense of control over what happens to them. Collective involvement about desired change and strategies for implementation can lend a sense of comfort, ownership, and security to those who will be directly affected by the change.
5. *Encourage consensus-building activities.* Consensus building enhances trust and facilitates change in that it provides opportunities for individuals to shape what happens at a site as a consequence of sharing individual viewpoints, facts, and opinions. A critical consensus-building question is, Can you live with it?
6. *Keep lines of communication open.* This helps to dispel rumors and encourages dialogue and healthy interaction to engender mutual

support. It also provides a forum for people to discuss the fears that often accompany change. People fear the unknown, losing jobs, and losing the familiar.

7. *Encourage disagreement.* Resistance usually stems from one's fear of being vulnerable or powerless. Information provided through resistance helps the facilitator of change realize what will help people feel less vulnerable and more in control. Hence change can be approached more graciously when such factors are considered.

8. *Celebrate small and large successes.* People have a need to be acknowledged. This builds morale, recognizes individual deeds that contribute to organizational growth and accomplishments, and propels change. Be consistent with acknowledgment.

Assumptions About Change

Creating a culture of trust is a prerequisite to implementing change. However, before examining the institutional and individual dimensions of change, it is important to review general assumptions that one should understand to maintain a perspective on change. Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) note several important assumptions about change:

1. Do not assume that your version of what the change should be is the one that should or could be implemented.
2. Assume that any significant innovation, if it is to result in change, requires individual implementors to work out their own meaning. Significant change involves a certain amount of ambiguity, ambivalence, and uncertainty for the individual about the meaning of the change.
3. Assume that conflict and disagreement are not only inevitable but fundamental to successful change. Because any group of people possesses multiple realities, any collective change attempt will necessarily involve conflict.
4. Assume that people need pressure to change (even in directions that they desire), but it will be effective only under conditions that allow them to react, form their own position, interact with other implementors, obtain technical assistance, and so on. Unless people are going to be replaced

with others who have different desired characteristics, relearning is at the heart of change.

5. Assume that effective change takes time. Expect significant change to take a minimum of 2 or 3 years.
6. Do not assume that the reason for lack of implementation is outright rejection of the values embodied in the change, or hard-core resistance to all change. Assume that there are a number of possible reasons: value rejection, inadequate resources, or insufficient time elapsed.
7. Do not expect all or even most people or groups to change. The complexity of change is such that it is impossible to bring about widespread reform in any large social system. Progress occurs when we take steps that *increase* the number of people affected.
8. Assume that you will need a *plan* that is based on the above assumptions and that addresses the factors known to affect implementation. Knowledge of the change process is essential.
9. Assume that no amount of knowledge will ever make it totally clear what action should be taken. Action decisions are a combination of valid knowledge, political considerations, on-the-spot decisions, and intuition.
10. Assume that change is a frustrating, discouraging business. (pp. 105-107).

Finally, when one is intimately involved in a change effort, it is often easy to lose heart. Keeping these assumptions in mind helps us to remember that change is not neat, but rather messy, most of the time. Yet change is inevitable and a vital part of organizational and personal growth.

Three Phases of Change

In an ideal state, one would collaboratively plan prior to implementing change and consider the following question: Is the change consistent with the vision and mission of the school? Careful attention should be given to diagnosing needs, generating commitment, and developing an action plan prior to implementing change. One principal shared: "I know that you can't walk in and change everything in one year. I found that out the hard way. You have to walk in and look things over critically and find out what your priorities are" (A Principal's Voice). Another, commenting on how much time the planning process took, said, "You just have to face the fact, as frustrating as it might be, that sometimes you have to go slow to go fast" (A Principal's Voice).

Unfortunately, reality often does not permit us to look things over critically or to go slow to go fast. Often, mandates thrust an organization into an implementation stage without regard for a needed readiness stage in which understanding and commitment to the change might be built. By examining research-based observations in the RAND study (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978) of the phases that an institution should go through for successful change implementation, individuals responsible for the innovation can work to assure that the needed stages of the change process occur.

The RAND study "set out to characterize the process by which an innovation is translated into an operating reality within school districts" (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, p. 13). The study uncovered an interesting phenomenon.

> Rather than a single process, several different ones could be observed for different innovations and also for the same innovation at different times in its evolution. Although all change agent projects evidently encountered a similar sequence of events and activities, three characteristic phases could be discerned within the overall process. . . . These phases roughly correspond to the project's beginning, middle, and end; but we did not use this simple terminology because neither beginning nor end makes sense in the context of a constantly evolving local educational system . . . and because instead of a chronological sequence "from beginning to end," the activities defining each phase overlapped one another. Instead, we call them *mobilization, implementation, and institutionalization.* (p. 13)

Thinking about the change process associated with implementing an innovation in terms of these three phases is helpful. One example might serve to highlight some of the critical activities within each phase. Suppose a school was interested in examining cooperative learning as a way to foster the development of students' academic and social skills.

In the mobilization phase, types of cooperative learning would be studied. This could include readings, videos, and visits to sites where cooperative learning is routinely used. Enthusiasm, commitment, dedication, and support for cooperative learning would be rallied among stakeholders who would ultimately be affected by the decision to implement its use: teachers, parents, students, administration, and support staff. Planning efforts should include the development of a team of representative stakeholders. Plans would be made regarding needed resources such as training, follow-up, and implementation support.

In the implementation phase, training would be provided, follow-up would occur, and feedback would be solicited regarding the quality of training and support and the applicability of cooperative learning to the classroom curriculum and student needs. Appropriate modifications would be made based on this feedback. "Review and refinement" sessions would be conducted. Typical follow-up sessions might include video analysis, peer coaching, collaborative lesson development, and idea swapping and sharing.

The institutionalization phase is marked by acceptance or final rejection of the change project. Institutionalized change would occur, then, if cooperative learning became standard educational practice in the classroom and at the school level. That is, it would serve as one strategy within every teacher's repertoire that could be used, given its suitability to a given lesson objective. Newcomers to the school would be taught cooperative learning strategies, and cooperative learning would be a part of faculty meetings.

Just as the organization goes through stages associated with the change process, so do individuals. The degree to which they receive support during this process will have a major impact on whether they will adopt a particular change.

A Look at Change From the Individual's Perspective

Federal and state initiatives, district goals, advances in technology, new curriculum frameworks, and a number of other forces are frequently requiring schools, and the individuals within them, to change.

The invitation, or in some cases, the mandate to change often asks the organization and staff members to abandon long-standing, familiar practices in exchange for new ways of doing things. This phenomenon often leaves people with a sense of loss, a longing to go back to the old ways of doing things, and a concern that being asked to do something differently implicitly means that what they had done before was not good. Frequently, a sense of denial emerges: "If we wait just long enough, this too will pass."

Individual responses to change differ. Some people welcome it; others greet it with fear or anger. Part of facilitating the change process involves understanding the individual's experience of change. Organizations change only as the individuals within the organization change. Change is a highly personal experience. Essentially, it is an individual experience and takes place one person at a time. Meaning is one critical influence that will ultimately determine whether a person is willing to change. If the change effort holds meaning for an individual, that person may be more likely to change. Teachers need to say and feel, "Yes, I can relate to this idea and see how it can improve student learning and make the job more exciting for me." People are more likely to adopt new behaviors when their own values and beliefs are consistent with the values and beliefs that undergird the new behaviors implied by the change.

Often, people are asked to change behavior before they have developed the new beliefs or values implicit in the change. This brings a feeling of discomfort. For long-lasting change to occur, individuals must first be provided with experiences through which they will come to develop the values and beliefs that drive the desired behaviors. Experiences change beliefs. Beliefs do not usually change without experiences. Many teachers have to experience positive results with students before adopting a new way of doing something.

To build interest and meaning for individuals who will be affected by change, the California School Leadership Academy identified four factors as part of a framework that school leaders should tap. Each of the factors in this framework should be considered before embarking on a change effort:

- Relevance—whether a change is relevant to one's life or work responsibilities

- Feasibility—whether people may view the change as "doable," given other demands on their time and their philosophical beliefs
- Involvement—whether the individual being affected by the change has input into what the change will look like, sound like, be like
- Trust—whether there is trust between the person being asked to change and the facilitator or initiator of the change

If staff members have collaboratively developed a vision that promotes teaching and learning and if the proposed change is consistent with the vision, chances are it will be greeted with greater enthusiasm. It will also be viewed as relevant, people will perceive it as feasible, it will have meaning because of the members' previous involvement with developing the vision, and an atmosphere of trust usually will have been established.

Stages of Concern

In addition to facilitating change by paying attention to creating individual meaning for the change process, change facilitators find it helpful to understand how individuals show their level of interest or concern for change. Hall, George, and Rutherford (1979) developed common characteristics that indicate one's interest or concern regarding innovative or change experiences. Hall et al. emphasized that how people perceive and understand change will be dictated by their personality and experience. One person may perceive a change as an outside threat, whereas others may view it as rewarding. The degree to which a concern may be assessed and responded to accordingly will facilitate one's understanding and experience of the change effort. Table 7.1, based on Hall et al.'s (1979) work, portrays these stages of concern.

One principal developed the chart shown in Table 7.2 after learning about these stages of concern to remind himself about how to respond to individuals' comments related to a change effort.

TABLE 7.1 Stages of Concern: Typical Expressions of Concern About the Innovation

Stage of Concern		*Expression of Concern*
6.	Refocusing	I have some ideas about something that would work even better.
5.	Collaboration	I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what other instructors are doing.
4.	Consequence	How is my use affecting kids?
3.	Management	I seem to be spending all my time in getting material ready.
2.	Personal	How will using it affect me?
1.	Informational	I would like to know more about it.
0.	Awareness	I am not concerned about it (the innovation).

SOURCE: Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, and Hall (1987).

TABLE 7.2 A Principal's Responses to Concerns About Change

Stage of Concern		*Response*
6.	Refocusing	Stimulate a discussion and provide a comfortable setting so teachers can discuss how this could be enhanced or improved.
5.	Collaboration	Relate ways that individuals can work together and share ideas.
4.	Consequence	Show how it might affect staff and students.
3.	Management	Invite users to demonstrate how they manage the use of an innovation.
2.	Personal	Share how it might affect student and teacher growth.
1.	Informational	Explain what "it" looks like in practice; provide examples.
0.	Awareness	Provide information.

Some Final Reflections on Change

How change is perceived has a major impact on organizational response. Harold Storlien, superintendent of the Medicine Hat School District in Alberta, Canada, advised the authors to look at all problems as challenges and opportunities. The principal can set a personal example by viewing change as an opportunity and encouraging risk taking and ownership on the part of teachers regarding the changes. This will help to create the atmosphere of trust that will be necessary for success. Key personnel in the process must constantly ask, Who do we need to inform? Who needs to know about what we are doing: Teachers? Parents? Principals? District personnel? Students? Community members? The media? Inclusion of relevant groups is a critical factor in the change process.

For example, the central office must be actively involved; there should be no surprises. They can supply the trainers, resources, time needed, and monetary support to implement the change. The whole system must be involved for the project to succeed.

Schools must also revisit their vision during the process and ask the following questions:

- Is the change on the right track?
- In what direction is the innovation going?
- If it appears to be going off track, is that okay?
- Is the project taking a direction that was unanticipated, but best?
- Has reality shown—based on actual classroom use—that the original plan was unrealistic?
- Do the new changes that appear necessary as a result of the initial experiments align with the vision?
- Should the vision be altered?
- Have the recommendations of the staff developers or previous examples of success of the innovation proved to be unworkable for this school? For example, a staff developer may recommend that student portfolios be implemented and required schoolwide after the training. Will that work for your staff?
- Should volunteers be enlisted to set examples and "massage" the project?

The ability level of staff developers brought into the school can obviously make or break the change effort. When staff developers are enlisted to start a program, are they operating on a level appropriate for the staff? Staff developers often know the ins and outs of an innovation and must remember that a staff member may know nothing about the proposed change. Staff developers must consider, If we listen but respond at a higher level than is appropriate, then we are not meeting needs. The track record of the staff developer must be considered. That is, has the staff developer been involved previously with the school district? Have they talked with the key individuals such as the principal, teachers, district personnel, parents, and students who may be affected by the change? Eventually, plans should be put in place to develop trainers at the local site.

A phenomenon to be aware of, and plan proactively for, is a state of entropy or running out of steam that occurs about midcourse in a change effort. Many change agents plan ceremonies to acknowledge progress to date and to recall critical events along the way in order to garner the enthusiasm and energy among organizational members to sustain progress in implementing the change. "Be aware of this reality, plan for it, but don't interpret it as losing the battle," commented one principal when discussing entropy (A Principal's Voice).

Do not be overconfident if the process gets off to a smooth start; that may be an indicator that something is wrong. The change may have been implemented too fast. Or the staff members, in the beginning, may be holding back their opposition and just going along with a top-down directive.

One must also consider whether the school is providing for rituals and ceremonies to dignify and deal with the loss of previously used methods when appropriate. Often, when a new program is being implemented, previous ways of doing things are discarded before time is taken to see how they may still have a function or perhaps be integrated with new practices. For example, if whole-language instruction is implemented, are the basal readers just being junked and considered to be an educational failure? How can the work of teachers who spent 20 years with the basals be dignified? Can an innovation be brought into a school with an acknowledgment of the elements of success of past practice? Is there a possibility that the old can be combined with the new instructional or curriculum strategy? For example, one principal reflected:

> There are some things that are working in that school and you need to work with people in the school who know what it has been like before. . . . If we did something last year that works, you need to inservice me. If it didn't work, we need to talk about how we can make it different. (A Principal's Voice)

For an innovation to succeed, the change and the mindset for change must take hold in the workplace. If you want to know if the innovation has occurred, do not just ask the superintendent or the principal or the teachers—visit the classrooms. Then visit the classrooms 2 years after the project was introduced. Are there now trainers in the school who can train staff new to the school on the innovation? That is, has the change been institutionalized? Also, how is the innovation working in other schools? How is the innovative practice (e.g., authentic assessment or interdisciplinary instruction) being modified and improved? Are teachers in the district who are teaching in high school talking with elementary staff at districtwide functions about the change? All personnel should be learning together throughout the system.

If the change is successfully implemented, eventual satisfaction should be observed throughout the system. The teachers should display satisfaction with the change, students will know of the change and talk about what has taken place, and site and district administrators will be a part of the process, as will the parents. A key characteristic should be more schoolwide interaction. In the end, change must be systemic; all elements that are affected by the change must be involved.

Kurt Lewin (1951) once said, "If you really want to understand something, try to change it!" Indeed, change is an all-encompassing experience that envelopes both the organization and its members, evoking a multitude of responses. The world is characterized by chaos, unpredictability, and change. The only way to keep up with the changes is by building change into the system. Guiding change so that it is successful is certainly an essential skill of an effective leader. On reflection, we should consider that the change process goes hand in hand with the notion of leader as learner. Indeed, the measure of a leader may well be his or her capacity to understand and work successfully with change—to stimulate it, shape it, nurture it, guide it, manage it, revise it, and keep the change journey going.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. Think about a change effort you are anticipating or are currently involved with. Which of the concepts presented in the chapter will be most relevant? Why?
2. Review Fullan and Stiegelbauer's (1991) assumptions about the change process. Select the assumptions that are most relevant to your school. Consider posting them on a bulletin board near your desk or in a file to which you frequently refer.
3. Practice listening to individuals as they express concerns about a change. See if you can determine the stage of concern and an appropriate response.
4. What do you see as the two or three easiest traps that a school leader can fall into when trying to implement change? How can these traps be avoided?
5. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

8

Building a Vision and a Mission Together

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

Eleanor Roosevelt

Are students, teachers, administrators, and parents hearing a consistent message about the school's purpose? How would students characterize their school? Would they say, "We have to go there every day—it's boring and not safe" or "School's okay, the teachers ask our opinions and it's helping me think and maybe get a job" and "If I need someone to talk to, I know I can count on my teachers"? Does the school have meaning in the lives of teachers beyond that of a workplace to make money? What do parents tell newcomers in the community about the school?

Why Have a School Vision?

The preceding questions all inquire, What does our school stand for? To answer this question with some clarity, a school must have a shared vision—a purpose for schooling, a purpose that can be seen or will be seen in the daily activities of the school. A school's philosophy or mission statement should be a written description of the vision.

There are as many definitions and descriptions of vision and mission as there are authors writing about the topic and schools trying to define their purpose. Although at first this may seem problematic, this may not be the case, as the process of creating a vision and mission building—which encourages participants to think about a school's purpose—may be more significant than an actual definition.

For a vision or mission to be alive, the building process must be a participatory one. Being involved in the process brings both ownership and commitment to the vision. Furthermore, it provides the opportunity for faculty members to discuss their values and beliefs related to schooling. When considering the vision- and mission-building process, one should keep in mind several ideas that have emerged from the literature on the characteristics of a powerful vision, especially for a learning community. A vision must be shared by the organization, and the organizational members—the people that make up the organization—must personally believe in the power of the vision as a force for creative, continuous improvement and as a force that can give personal meaning to their lives (Senge, 1990; Wheatley, 1992).

A school vision helps students, teachers, administrators, and parents have a sense of what is important in their particular setting. Knowing what is important helps those involved with the school make choices. It helps the administrator to set priorities, the teacher to direct a lesson, and the student to prepare for class. A vision brings commitment throughout the system as people work together to create a school in which they personally are stakeholders. They believe in their work.

The principal should play a major role in transforming the values and beliefs of the school into a vision. This is accomplished through both symbolic and expressive leadership behaviors. From the symbolic perspective, a principal models and focuses individual attention on what is important. From the expressive side of leadership, principals, talking with teachers, help to crystallize and communicate the rationale for a vision and mission and generate shared discussions about what is important in the school. This focus on the meaning of a school leads to the development of a mission statement grounded in the collective beliefs of the staff. The process creates a commitment to shared direction and an energy to pursue it. The shared meaning helps to create a team orientation: "Yes, we are working together!" Teachers can be confident that colleagues are working on the same key principles with students related to academic or social goals on each grade level. Interestingly, when school beliefs and values are internalized, teachers function more freely and effectively—with less supervisory intervention—because they know what is important in that particular school setting (Grimmett, Rostad, & Ford, 1992).

Moreover, given the many external pressures and expectations put on us, a school must remain focused on pursuing its vision lest it risk veering off in one direction after another. Unless we have a clear focus, we may be spinning our wheels yet remain under the false impression that we are productively moving ahead.

A vision helps members of an organization to identify what is important and avoid spending time on what is not. Drucker (1992), in reviewing the history of management, notes that we often fail to "work smarter" and only ask "How is it [the job] done?" instead of "What is the task?" and "Why do it?" When our mission is clear, we know what the task is and why we should do it. Thus a school leader, in a setting where a shared vision exists, should be able to answer questions such as

- What kinds of social skills are important to the culture of the school?
- Do the results of teaching and learning have meaning in the workplace once students complete their schooling?
- What are the best teaching strategies and schoolwide traditions to accomplish the intended outcomes?

Peters and Austin (1985) stressed that effective principals often are "obsessed" with outcomes that represent the beliefs and values of the school. They function as a galvanizing force that propels collective actions toward their accomplishment.

School Activities That Highlight the Mission

The mission should consistently emphasize commitment to children, a commitment demonstrated in both talk and actions. During the school day, effective principals discuss educational issues, not Saturday night's faculty party. Successful principals serve as models for teachers, work closely with them, and engage in conversations about teaching and about children. Committed principals ask about students: "Is Toby improving in math?" "Has Stacey's home situation settled down?" "How has Bobby adjusted to his brother's jail sentence?" They ask teachers, "Is there something I should be doing that I am not?" "How might I support you in pursuing the mission of our school through classroom and schoolwide activities?"

Bennis and Nanus (1985) emphasize that getting "the message across unequivocally at every level is an absolute key" (p. 43). The message—the school mission—should be reiterated as often as possible:

orally, in memos, during faculty meetings, at parent gatherings, and in working in classrooms with children. At one middle school, students take a homework folder home every evening. The mission is printed on the inside cover. Sixth and seventh graders must have signatures from parents indicating that homework has been completed. Students in the eighth grade carry the same folder but sign nightly for themselves.

The most effective way to communicate the mission is by personal example. A principal should spend time with students (low, medium, and high achievers) when possible, know their names, and join in celebrating student achievement. To illustrate, principals should use their offices to hear third graders read and share lunch with the middle school student government, high school National Honor Society, or varsity basketball team. Principals should spend time on the playground, in halls, and in classrooms. The vision or mission can also be seen through student recognition assemblies, complimentary notes to teachers, parent nights, bulletin boards that display student work in prominent places, and positive calls home to parents.

A note to faculty on the last day of school can emphasize the mission:

> Dear Staff,
>
> On this last day of classes, I just want to reaffirm how much I appreciate your professionalism and dedication to our students.
>
> Reflecting on this year, I can't help but think—extending my thoughts back to last August—that we brought 10 new teachers into our elementary school program, yet we quickly became one unified, professional group. This is a tribute to all of you and our mutual desire to work as a team in the best interest of our kids.
>
> Reflecting back on your expectations for the class, how did you do on your legacy (with the class)? What was the most enduring contribution that you made to your class? Will it change next year or remain the same? Regardless, a key must always be to continue our elementary school mission: Let's challenge each child, and let that child know that we care.
>
> Thank you for your support. Have a special summer.
>
> Sincerely,
> Bonnie

When discussing school culture, Deal and Peterson (1990) provide additional examples of activities that can contribute to strengthening a school's mission:

> School traditions such as alumni homecomings, holiday celebrations, end-of-year gatherings, and yearly recognitions of merit, when infused with core values of the school, can build a shared sense of community and purpose. Graduation ceremonies, retirement rituals, academic awards banquets, and ceremonies to celebrate the granting of tenure to teachers can solidify the values of teachers and others, signal school purposes, and provide a social event to tighten collegial bonds.

To clarify what a school stands for, faculty groups, students, and often parents work with the administration to build a school philosophy statement. As mentioned previously, the process aspect of this activity often is more important. The process will be slightly different in each school. Moreover, specific school (i.e., if there is a district mission statement), departmental, grade-level, or class goals derived from the mission statement will have stronger roots and a clearer mandate because of the mission-building and goal-setting process. The process and written results also help to keep the school leaders accountable.

Let us examine the end result of this process and then examine how a mission statement can be created by school groups. The following document, the philosophy statement of the American Embassy School, helps all involved with the school to see the school vision.

The American Embassy School Philosophy

> We believe in the dignity and worth of each student and recognize the importance of their responsibilities to their fellow citizens in the world community.
>
> We believe that all youth should have equal opportunity for education consistent with their individual capabilities and with their personal and social needs.
>
> We believe that change is a constant factor in life. Therefore, education should encourage in students the development of personal values and thinking processes which will facilitate their ability to adapt to a changing society.

> We believe that learning is an unbroken activity, continued throughout an individual's life span. Therefore, education should foster independent thinking, exploration and experimentation as a lifelong process.

Based on this philosophy statement, the following goals of the American Embassy School, Elementary Division, were written by the teachers, administration, and school board.

> Guided by the general goals of the American Embassy School, the elementary school will:
>
> - Establish a firm foundation in the core curriculum of Reading, Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science
> - Enrich the curriculum through age-appropriate exposure to subjects such as Physical Education, Art, Foreign Language, Music, and Computers
> - Enable students to gain an understanding and appreciation of India and global issues
> - Provide an environment that celebrates and promotes maximum growth and development of children
> - Instill an interest in and an eagerness for learning, permitting children to realize their fullest potential
> - Recognize and respond to the individual intellectual, aesthetic, physical, emotional, and social developmental patterns of children
> - Develop a program of active, child-centered learning based on a progression from concrete to more abstract thinking

Joint Administrative and Faculty Mission Statement

An interesting variation on developing a schoolwide philosophy statement is for the administrative and teaching staff to create a joint mission statement to define their role as professionals. The following mission statement was developed on a voluntary basis by interested administrators and teachers during several sessions (including Saturday mornings). The statement was shared with the whole administrative and teaching staff for final approval. The results are as follows:

> The professional staff of the American Embassy School strives to offer the best educational program possible in order to develop the mind and character of each student.
>
> 1. Based on the goals of the school, the professional staff determines curriculum and instruction.
> 2. Within available means, we prioritize and manage resources and programs to provide the best education possible for our students.
> 3. We work to effectively communicate goals, objectives, and strategies to parents, students, and each other.
> 4. We are committed to ongoing professional development for the benefit of ourselves, our students, and each other.

Slogans keep the mission statement alive in the eyes of organizational members. A simple school slogan, such as "AES—Where children are challenged in caring classrooms" or "Every person is a learner," can signal to a faculty what is important in a particular school setting. In a workshop with the support staff, the slogan "AES—Where every family will always feel welcome" served as a catalyst to institute a new registration procedure for student admissions.

Mission-Building Activity

Although there are several ways to acquire a mission statement—borrowing one, buying one, synthesizing one—the most powerful strategy is to create one. The following technique represents one approach to developing a mission based on the collective visions of the staff, students, and parents. This approach has been used successfully throughout the United States and Canada.

Materials Needed:

- Chart paper
- Tape
- Markers
- Large Post-it™ notes
- Index cards

Steps:

1. Explain what a mission statement is. For example, "a mission statement communicates a vision of what the organization stands for, what its members believe, and what ends will be accomplished in keeping with the purpose and beliefs. It serves as a galvanizing force for action."
2. Build a rationale for a mission statement. This step might include explaining why mission statements are helpful (shared sense of purpose, common direction, energizer) and examining mission statements from other organizations. During this examination, the staff could be asked to analyze the values that seem to be implicit in the mission statement. Identify how a mission statement influences a staff member's life.
3. Invite the staff to take part in the development of the mission statement. Explain that this will allow the opportunity to synthesize individual staff member's dreams or visions into a statement reached through consensus. This statement will represent the ends to which all within the organization will strive.
4. Ask staff members to think for a moment about the place where they would like to send their own very special child to school. How would the child be treated? What would his or her experiences be like? How would he or she feel? Describe your thoughts on a Post-it™ note.
5. Now think about the place where you would like to go to work everyday. What would it be like? How would you feel? How would people interact? Write this on a Post-it™ note.
6. Take your two Post-it™ notes and fuse them into one. Write your thoughts on an index card.
7. Individuals then meet as table groups of four to six people and share their index cards. After they are all read, the table group creates a composite of the individual cards to which all in the group can agree. This is written with markers on chart paper.
8. Pairs of table groups meet and share their charts. They synthesize their two charts into one.

9. Continue the process until one chart is created that represents the shared visions of all in the room.
10. If parents and representative students have not been involved in this process, this same procedure may be repeated and the products of their work brought to the faculty. At this point, the staff could incorporate these charts with the faculty work.
11. At another time, a contest could be held or the group could work together to create a slogan that would encapsulate the mission statement.

A mission statement alone, however, will not stay alive unless specific goals are created to accomplish the essence of the mission.

Developing Yearly Goals to Accomplish the Mission

Another excellent exercise to keep the school vision and mission in mind is to develop annual goals for a school that are congruent with the mission. The process starts near the end of a school year looking toward next year's opening of school. The process is very simple. The teaching staff look at last year's goals and divide into about five groups of teachers across grade levels and across friendships. (For the first year, initial goals can be set up using the topic headings such as those listed in the example that follows.) Each group reviews the goals to get the ideas flowing and then answers three questions: What are our major successes this year based on the goals? What are some areas that we still need to improve on? and What are the recommendations for next year? When the groups reassemble, they listen for common points (the secretary takes dictation or a recorder posts these on butcher paper). When three or four groups make the same point, the teachers know that they are on to something (e.g., the following document includes wait time with questions and giving students responsibility because several groups indicated an interest in pursuing those areas). This energizes and begins focusing the staff for the next year. The faculty fine-tunes the goals during the first month of school and receives individual copies of the final document. The goals should be revisited often during the year by sharing experiences during faculty meetings relating to implementing the goals.

Again, it is important to stress that the process of writing specific school goals helps keep the principal and staff accountable. The school goals become the "checklist for success" for that year in the school—and ultimately the total staff is responsible for implementing the goals.

These goals were developed as a result of the process discussed previously:

Elementary School Goals

A. *Student Expectations*

1. *Focus on student responsibility to promote academic and social independence and acceptance of consequences. Stress student courtesy, caring, and tolerance.*

   Implementation:

   - Tailor the school rules to promote your classroom goals.
   - Hold recognition assemblies with special themes (e.g., proper nutritional habits).
   - Use "Citizen of the Week" awards to emphasize specific school goals.
   - Stress importance of positive behavior on the school buses.

2. *In the classroom, maintain high expectations and challenge each child.*

   Implementation:

   - Encourage independent, critical, and divergent student responses.
   - Encourage use of learning centers and enrichment resources or strategies.

3. *Raise faculty and student consciousness concerning environmental issues.*

   Implementation:

   - Model recycling, energy conservation, and "less is more" themes.

- Model paper reduction (e.g., use board instead of worksheets when possible).

B. *Curriculum and Instruction*

1. *Promote the new language arts program.*

   Implementation:

   - Stress the integration of the language arts.
   - Emphasize content area writing.
   - Recognize importance of public speaking.
   - Increase use of reference material.

2. *Continue the curriculum review process.*

   Implementation—Science Committee:

   - Principles adopted by the Science Committee emphasizing "Project 2061" will be shared with the whole faculty to make appropriate curriculum decisions.

   Implementation—Reading Committee and Fine Arts Committee:

   - Committees review important curriculum developments and adopt principles.

3. *Mathematics: Further work with NCTM standards.*

   Implementation:

   - Conduct a math investigation on each grade level.
   - Provide workshops for new staff on NCTM standards.

4. *Refine communication and resources used in elementary school library.*

   Implementation:

   - Work on research skills curriculum and library use for research projects in Grades 3-5.
   - Teachers should notify library of major reports and grade-level student needs.

5. *Raise consciousness concerning curriculum connections in all subject areas.*

6. *Social studies: Continue refinement of global studies curriculum.*

   Implementation:

   - Increase communication for regular classroom lessons on global studies in Grades 2-4.
   - Curriculum resources should be easily available to all teachers.
   - Work on time line for semester reports (in Grades 3-5) to avoid overload in library and end-of-year pressures.

7. *Place special emphasis on importance of curriculum pacing in all subject areas.*

8. *Pilot Telecommunication Computer Project.*

9. *Continue to challenge students with appropriate teaching strategies.*

   Implementation:

   - Refine questioning and feedback strategies to diagnose student needs and provide appropriate resources.

10. *Use grade-level meetings to implement Columbus Quincentenary ideas.*

C. *Staff Development*

1. *Expand peer-coaching activity to include a variety of reflective teaching activities.*

2. *Teachers' Center: Continue to expand use.*

   Implementation:

   - With significant number of new staff, assist them to maximize use.
   - Highlight professional journal articles with all staff.

3. *Portfolios: Extend student options and teacher involvement.*

   Implementation:

   - Develop buddy system to support teacher dialogue about portfolios.
   - Expand portfolio project to include more science and math options.
   - Continue to develop core staff with portfolio expertise.

4. *Clinical supervision: Pursue variety of ways for teachers to assess their growth (video- and audiotape, teacher portfolios, various observation instruments).*

5. *Faculty meetings: Increase teacher input and participation.*

   Implementation:

   - Provide time for teachers to share ideas—especially successes.
   - Increase cross-grade-level exchanges.

D. *Assessment*

1. *Experiment with a variety of reading and math assessments that reflect curriculum and instructional strategies and the systematic assessment of progress.*

2. *Refine cumulative record card to reflect curriculum changes.*

3. *Early Childhood Education Center: Systematically use high-scope assessment instruments to observe students and tailor the curriculum to individual needs.*

E. *Parent-Teacher Relations*

1. *Increase communication with parents through the monthly coffees.*

Implementation:

- Assist more non-English-speaking parents who attend coffees.

2. *Emphasize effective proactive communications with all parents.*

F. ***General***

1. *Increase communication between specialist and regular classroom teachers.*

Implementation:

- Both groups of teachers should take initiative regarding communication.
- Use "look book" daily notes to inform specialists of field trips.
- Increase involvement of specialists in grade-level meetings.

Leaders emphasize that what a school stands for should be celebrated and not become simply an idea that gets lost in a dusty file. Individuals working in a school should work to agree on what their school represents. In fact, to take the idea a step further, many individual educational professionals are now writing professional and personal mission statements to help them take greater ownership of their day-to-day school activities and personal lives. This also helps school leaders keep on track by fostering constant reflection about their personal and professional work and experiences.

Much of what we have stated is encapsuled in the words of Drucker (1992):

> What distinguishes the leader from the misleader are his goals. Whether the compromise he makes with the constraints of reality—which may involve political, economic, financial or people problems—are compatible with his mission and goals or lead away from them determines whether he is an effective leader. And whether he holds fast to a few basic standards (exemplifying them in his own conduct), or whether "stand-

> ards" for him are what he can get away with, determines whether the leader has followers or only hypocritical time-servers. (p. 121)

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. Consider, given the school in which you work, how a mission statement and slogan might be created.
2. Should the mission statement be chiseled in stone, or should it be a flexible document?
3. Write a brief mission statement that exemplifies your vision of the good school. Provide two or three examples (paint an image) that show how the vision is realized in the day-to-day school activities.
4. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

PART IV

WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD A LEARNING ORGANIZATION

9

Enhancing Teacher Growth Through Supervision and Evaluation

How do you evaluate . . . and do it effectively without intimidation? Without concern for job futures, on the part of teachers?

A PRINCIPAL'S VOICE

Issues and Dilemmas

If schools are to be regarded as learning communities, everyone in a school must engage in the study of what constitutes learning. Our vision of lifelong learning for students can hold greater meaning if teachers and administrators also have an ongoing conversation to improve their talents and skills. Yet, in many schools, teachers feel intimidated when principals walk into their classrooms and are especially fearful of the observation and conferencing process. This is a clear indicator that the traditional administrative evaluation process has failed. Ideally, principals should frequently visit classrooms to see, share, and affirm the important work of schools. Interestingly, teachers, when looking for a new job, often resent the glowing written recommendations from principals who never seriously visited their classroom. This tells us that teachers feel "cheated" about the assessment of their performance and the missed opportunity for growth that could have been fostered by the principal.

As noted in chapter 2, Deming stressed that when employees are having problems, management must learn to take responsibility, for the system is likely failing the employees. Deming opposed performance evaluations, merit ratings, and annual reviews (Walton, 1986, pp. 90-92). Although we maintain that practical considerations relating to schools and present district, state, and national educational polices make it difficult to fully embrace Deming's view on evaluation, we strongly believe that the dialogue he has stimulated in education may have a profound impact on schools and the literature about schooling (e.g., English & Hill, 1994). Moreover, Deming would certainly stress that the old administrative paradigm of intimidation and control lent itself to "snoopervising" and caused bitterness on the part of teachers as principals told teachers what they were "doing wrong." That model has no place in schools thought of as learning communities. Thus we need to move away from operating on fear so the notion of growth can be built in from day one. Teachers should know right from the start that supervision and the specific evaluation process are intended to help them—that is the principal's job. Risk-taking behavior cannot flourish in an intimidating environment.

In this chapter, we will examine the goals of supervision, supervision practices, the relationship between supervision and evaluation, and then, the evaluation process.

How should supervision be characterized by today's principals? The following definition of supervision can answer this question: Supervision is providing support for teachers so they become the best they can be. Implicit in this definition is the development and refinement of a knowledge base and craft practice regarding effective teaching and learning. To carry out this definition, supervisors provide resources and promote formal and informal conversations with and among teachers to affect curriculum, teaching, learning, and professional development.

Although classroom observations and teacher conferences based on the observations are critical to the supervision process, the definition above is intended to expand greatly the possibilities of supervision to help teachers "be the best they can be" by employing additional methods of support. For example, recommending a professional journal to a teacher or sharing an article with the staff may be important contributions made by a school principal. Additionally, support for interdisciplinary planning, assisting teachers in developing an advanced-placement high school course, or facilitating a professional forum on educational needs for the new millennium are all activities that can be supported directly or indirectly by the school leader in an effort to foster professional growth.

Essential Ingredients for Successful Supervision

To maximize the impact of supervision, principals should develop an honest, caring, and trustful relationship with teachers. Essential to that process is acceptance of the notion that as adults we have innate needs and desires to improve, grow, and learn. These desires are essential characteristics in a healthy school culture. The early research of Herzberg and colleagues (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959) and Maslow (1954) demonstrated that as lower level factors such as physiological needs and safety were satisfied, motivation came from "finding one's niche," the work itself, and the sense of achievement. These, in turn, fostered a sense of self-esteem that allowed risk-taking behavior so that the teacher became motivated to go beyond his or her competence, to stretch and grow (Glickman, 1990; Herzberg et al., 1959).

As principals actively learn from the teachers and students around them, and acknowledge that learning, everyone in the school becomes empowered with the knowledge that his or her ideas are influential. This notion can help to create a risk-taking climate in the school. When teachers see that principals desire to learn and share ideas, it is a lot easier to reciprocate that trust. If we really mean that the "leader is a learner," then the principal should expect to learn a great deal through the supervision and evaluation process—especially as related to the particular context of a teacher's classroom decisions: "Why that decision, at that moment?" This gets into the ecology of individual classrooms and gives special meaning to each teacher decision and classroom event. Furthermore, the leader-as-learner model can be transferred to the student as teachers show students that as teachers, they are learning every day.

The ideal dialogue between principals and teachers can, in some ways, be seen as analogous to the process of scientific discovery. When old ideas are found to be ineffective or "mistakes" are discovered, the scientific community should celebrate, for an advancement has occurred. We need to celebrate risk taking and the process of thoughtful risk-taking behavior.

A postobservation conference with an experienced kindergarten teacher effectively illustrated this process. The lesson objective was to help students identify a variety of animal coats (e.g., skin, fur, scales, feathers) and recognize how the coats protect the animals. The teacher opened the lesson, showing a variety of animal coats and had the students touch them. She then asked the following question: "What do you think the fur and feathers do in the rain?" The kindergartners answered as follows: "Get wet!" The answer she expected was "The coats or coverings protect the animals." The students did not see protection at all—they saw a lot of wet animals!

Formative evaluation
Summative evaluation

Formative evaluation: Formative, growth-oriented experiences (direct supervision, readings, peer coaching, action research)

Summative evaluation: A check to see if desired instructional and professional behaviors are being practiced (curriculum implementation, instructional repertoire, professional growth)

Figure 9.1. Formative and Summative Evaluation Continuum

The principal listened carefully as the teacher expertly analyzed her lesson. This experienced teacher noted that regardless of how long one teaches, "We tend to focus in on the lesson objective from an adult's viewpoint, instead of thinking what a child might say." As a supervisor, the principal was fortunate to be on the listening end of this conference as the teacher expressed an insight of universal meaning for all teachers.

A discussion of supervision would be inadequate without providing a model of evaluation that can be used in schools. However, an important issue should first be addressed. Practitioners are constantly advised to separate supervision from evaluation. Although conceptually it may be ideal to separate the formative and summative process (e.g., supervision and evaluation), the political reality and the day-to-day interactions between teachers and principals make this an unrealistic aim. Reality—for the principal practitioner—is that you can never fully separate supervision and evaluation. A helpful way to conceptualize the interrelationship between supervision and evaluation is to think of supervision as the formative process that allows for several "dress rehearsals." The evaluation is the summative process in which institutionalized schoolwide guidelines are used to assess teacher performance. In most cases, this process documents specific teacher behaviors in relation to stated school, district, or state guidelines. Figure 9.1 demonstrates the interrelationship between these two concepts.

It is important not to make the supervision or evaluation process intimidating and to emphasize the growth orientation of both processes. This idea can be shared with the total faculty at the beginning of the year as well as during individual conferences with teachers. Most of our teachers are good to excellent, but we constantly talk about the problems of firing the 5%. Certainly, it is important to uphold standards of excellence. After assisting a marginal teacher, if no growth occurs, we should document his or her lack of progress, using a legally defensible approach. For the most part, these cases tend to be a small percentage of the staff. We need to focus on the 95% and keep them motivated and excited about their growth. Even champions need coaches, and we need to continually provide feedback to all teachers, including the best ones. As Blanchard and Johnson (1983) stressed in *The One Minute Manager*, "Feedback is the Breakfast of Champions" (p. 67). Principals need to keep that idea in mind. Principals can model this notion by asking for feedback from teachers regarding the effectiveness of their supervisory practices.

By emphasizing the theme of growth, the supervisory climate is enhanced, and the entire school takes great strides toward becoming a community of learners. One principal reported,

> One of my most productive conferences was with an expert teacher who was trying specific cooperative learning techniques for the first time. My job with her was just as important as with the marginal teacher. I needed to do what I could to provide meaningful data, ask questions to foster reflection and analysis, and to keep her motivation high. What she gained in her experiment with cooperative learning was a clinic for both of us on what should be included in a good cooperative learning lesson. I gained insight into what supervisory approaches were helpful. I won't have to worry about burnout from that teacher for a long time, because she was engaged and motivated by the learning process related to the implementation of cooperative learning and the opportunity to reflect and analyze the lesson and its effects. Furthermore, her enthusiasm will hopefully stimulate other members of the staff, and her students! (A Principal's Voice)

A critical role of principals is to help teachers fine-tune their professional skills. A key is to encourage teachers to reflect on what is taking place in their classrooms, in relation to instructional and curricular decisions. Although we cannot assume that all teachers are reflective and feel a part of their own professional development journey, many are. Those who are not can be assisted by the principal's direct supervision. As growth occurs, the principal responds to the teacher's development by offering the teacher an increased menu of choices from which to select developmental activities. "It is not the particular classroom practice but the reasoning behind the teacher's practice that marks the level of maturity of the teacher" (Glickman, 1990, p. 65).

The following example from Pat Puleo (1993) in the *California ASCD Newsletter* describes how powerful involving professionals in self-evaluation can be:

> Over the last few years, Golden Hill has conducted meetings with the community and school personnel to establish expectations for our graduates. During these meetings, student expectations fell into four areas. Students need to be able to communicate, define and solve problems, know how to do research and evaluate, and possess good interpersonal skills. To this end, school goals were established emphasizing these attributes across the curriculum rather than establishing goals and objectives aligned with isolated subject area competence. Teacher goals were then developed to address these new student goals.
>
> As principal, my observations were focused on the teachers' emphasis on the new goals and objectives. The staff member directed the observation. The evaluation conferences were directed by the teacher. My goal was to move staff toward self-evaluation. I wanted to be the one to hold up the mirror. As I sat with individual teachers, they reflected on their progress. They brought evidence of their students' accomplishments. The most powerful part of the interview occurred when I asked teachers to identify their strengths and the areas on which they would like to work. Their thoughts were insightful and honest. Without exception, their reflections were what I would have identified as areas for growth and commendation.
>
> In order to bring the process full circle, I included a copy of the last year's final evaluation in each teacher's opening

> day packet. This gave each of them a chance to see what areas they had identified as strengths and what areas they had committed to work on for the new year. Unbelievably, I had several staff members ask for a mid-year review. They found the process beneficial. Some even took the self-evaluation format into their classrooms and used it as a tool to assess student work!
>
> Aligning teacher goals with school goals and providing an environment which encourages teachers to become self-assessors fosters greater professional growth. If we truly want students to become self-evaluators, it is critical that we offer teachers the same opportunity. Studies show that evaluation is ineffective for teachers after five years. Self-reflection and growth can last a lifetime.

It is our responsibility to expose teachers to a variety of useful, relevant instructional ideas. Principals can serve as facilitators. In this role, they can foster teachers' reflective practices to assist them in their analysis of teaching and interactions with students. At other times, teachers may request direct intervention from the principal. One teacher noted, "What if I am missing something that is really a problem in my teaching? How will I know if I cannot determine that as an area of weakness in myself?"

Beyond the classroom, establishing a professional video library of effective techniques, important issues, or teaching episodes can also help. Showing episodes during faculty meetings or encouraging individuals or groups of teachers to view and share ideas can help professionals reflect on their decisions. As Glickman (1990) suggests, in addition to direct assistance, individuals grow as a consequence of "curriculum development, staff development, group development and action research" (p. 7).

A workshop for teachers new to a school, reviewing the philosophy behind the school supervision process, can certainly help to provide the rationale and reduce teacher anxiety about the process. Moreover, principals who bring a "new system" owe an explanation to the staff. Also, longtime teaching veterans in a school can often use a refresher concerning how evaluation and growth are related, and the principal can benefit significantly from staff comments at a workshop on how the process is going. To illustrate, the following principles of supervision and the explanation of a clinical supervision model described later in this chapter have been shared successfully in workshops with all teachers new to an elementary division in one school system.

Supervision Workshop

Several principles concerning supervision can assist in fostering a win/win approach:

1. Effective human relations skills are essential to supervision.
2. The supervision process is used to enhance thinking about teaching and learning.
3. Supervision should be used to facilitate reflection, self-analysis, and self-improvement.
4. Teachers have a right to grow.
5. It is the supervisor's job to set teachers up to win.
6. Supervisors must first build trust before they can expect teachers to become risk takers.
7. Teachers, because of their daily experiences, are the experts on teaching—supervisors learn from teachers about teaching and about effective supervisory behaviors.
8. Concentrate on the 95% and remember the champions.

Effective Instructional Strategies

The link between supervision and evaluation and effective instruction should be an inextricable one. That is, the supervision and evaluation process should be driven by an understanding of how the mind processes information and the necessary elements that contribute to learning. This focus also broadens traditional notions of supervision and evaluation by including an affective dimension. Recent research on brain functioning seems to indicate, for instance, that when learners feel at risk, their capacity to learn is reduced considerably because much of the mind's focus is turned to the task of establishing a sense of well-being. Therefore, the learning environment and the attitudes and perceptions toward learning tasks should be included in any supervisory or evaluation focus.

Although many teaching strategies exist, it is helpful to examine some general themes that often characterize core elements of effective instruction.

Preparing the Student's Mind for Learning

The minds of the learners first need to be prepared for the learning about to occur. This requires a meaningful focus of the learner's attention. Once this occurs, it is important that an outcome be stated so that the student will know where the lesson is headed. Even with a discovery lesson, a general outcome can be stated; for example, "By the end of this lesson, you will be able to solve this mystery!" To begin instruction at the appropriate level of difficulty and resolve any preconceived misconceptions about what is to be taught, it is helpful to assess what students already know about the topic of the lesson to be taught and what they would like to know.

In addition, because the mind stores information according to whether it perceives there is a later, future purpose, it is helpful either to provide a meaningful purpose or engage students in identifying the possible reasons for the lesson. Furthermore, if there are prior learnings that may assist the student in this lesson, they should be recalled as well.

Instruction

Instruction usually consists of three parts: input, modeling or demonstration, and active involvement or rehearsal.

Input can be provided in several ways. The teacher may provide information, perform an experiment, show a video, assign a reading, or construct a model. Or input might be provided by students, such as explaining a math investigation to the class.

Following this, it is helpful to provide a demonstration or model so that the learners can see what was introduced during the input phase.

Finally, students should be provided with an opportunity to rehearse what has just been taught and modeled. The key to the rehearsal is that students should be able to demonstrate to the teacher that they comprehend the intended input and, as appropriate, that they can either recall the information or perform the task.

Practice

To develop fluency and accuracy, and to promote long-term remembering, students should practice the new learning under the teacher's guidance. When students have demonstrated that they can perform the skill independently, they should be encouraged to practice. This increases the likelihood that students will store or internalize the information that has been taught.

These core elements can be helpful as part of the framework for discussing lesson plans, observing a lesson, and assessing to what extent the teacher accomplished his or her desired goals, based on student understanding.

Increasing Teacher and Administrative Reflection Through Clinical Supervision

A four-step variation on the clinical supervision model that follows can be used to implement an examination of these elements. With this model, the emphasis moves from sole concentration on the classroom observation to more important conversations and reflections about planning, teaching, and student work. Thus the model serves as a catalyst for talking about teaching. A critical part of this model is the preobservation conference that precedes the teaching. As Costa and Garmston (1991) have stated, "A good pre-observation conference is worth six observations" (pp. 18-19). The preobservation conference provides an opportunity for the teacher to unpack the thinking behind the planning process. It also provides a reference point to compare expected and actual outcomes in the postobservation conference.

1. The Preobservation Conference

Usually the teacher will choose a lesson, the key points to be observed, and the desired type of data-gathering method. There needs to be a focus on building rapport, trust, and self-esteem.

Listening to the teacher during the conference is a key supervisory objective. If the teacher talks more during the conference than the principal, declare the conference a success. Why? Because the teacher is talking and thinking about teaching. Principals have to get away from the notion that it is their role to "run" the conference. The more specific the preobservation conference discussion, the more fine-tuned the lesson is likely to be. As the lesson unfolds, data is gathered, based on the focus identified in the preobservation conference. This provides feedback for analysis that will occur in the postobservation conference.

2. Observation

Traditionally, this has been the key step. The supervisor must work to reduce a teacher's anxiety about this step and stress that the primary purpose of the observation is to provide student work samples and instructional episodes for discussion during the conference. Students may be informed about the observation so that they can see that adults also continue to grow. For example, "Mrs. Johnson will be coming in to watch our class today. She'll be interested in discovering what helps us to learn."

3. Reflections on the Observation

With this four-step model, solitary reflection is essential and critical to the success of the process. If a supervision model is used that includes a pre- and postconference, then it is important, vitally important, that the teacher has an adequate opportunity to analyze the lesson before the postobservation conference. Along with the student work, the principal should provide the type of data requested by the teacher. The teacher may then review the principal's script-tape (e.g., written play-by-play of the lesson), examine a principal's diagram of the verbal flow during the lesson, a video- or audiotape, or a principal's summary of the lesson. Often, a principal may need time to prepare the observational material for teachers. Another approach is to provide the data to the teacher immediately following the lesson without any supervisory comments so that he or she may analyze it before the conference. The teacher, however, should be invited to reflect on the lesson and make observations before examining the data. The teacher analysis of the lesson may include a wide range of comments, such as why spur-of-the-moment decisions were made or what surprises occurred during the lesson. It may also include a comparison between the reflective data and the observational data.

4. The Postobservation Conference

The goal of the postconference is to encourage the teacher to reflect on his or her decisions (e.g., What happened as expected? and What happened differently?). The teacher should have an opportunity to verbalize a comparison between his or her recollections of the lesson with the actual data from the observation.

Again, the teacher should dominate the discussion and, in most cases, decide where to go next. Interestingly, when trust is established, teachers prefer to take the initiative in stating that a lesson was successful or did not go well. When the teacher spots a problem, he or she takes ownership and is in the driver's seat in recommending ways to fine-tune a teaching strategy.

Tips for Conferencing and Observing

Obviously, the preceding supervision model has many variations and depends greatly on the experience of the teacher, the experience of the principal, the context of the school and students, and most important, on the relationship between the supervisor and teacher. The tips that follow are intended to generate additional ideas to enhance the supervisory process.

Use student work. Use the student work from the lesson when discussing the lesson outcomes. When possible, it is very helpful (following an observation) for the teacher to bring student work samples from the lesson to the conference. This provides data to discuss, What did the students do? What did they accomplish? In most cases, this is very satisfying for the teacher and gives the principal a feeling for what is taking place in class.

Videotape. If teachers videotape their lesson for an observation, consider taping only part of the lesson: the opening, the student group work, the teacher modeling, the questioning, and the closure. A 10-minute video can easily lead to a 45-minute conversation.

Include student input. Students can add an important dimension to the evaluation process. During this past school year, one principal videotaped the preconference, lesson, and postconference with an experienced member of the staff. The teacher was helping the principal refine his conferencing techniques as he provided feedback on her teaching. The lesson was on dividing fractions. The teacher was very disappointed with how she began the lesson, and she shared this sentiment with the principal and her students after the lesson. She felt that their difficulty during the lesson was due to a lack of clarity on her part. The students told her that she was "way off" regarding her feelings about the lesson and that this particular lesson was one of the most challenging and interesting lessons of the school year. The students explained that the lesson really made them think, helped them to actually see how to get the answers, and realize that more than one correct answer was possible. That experience helped the teacher and supervisor to reflect on how difficult lesson success is to evaluate.

Elementary versus secondary supervisory activities. On becoming an elementary principal, one of the authors was anxious to know whether his supervision skills, developed in a high school setting, would need a "major overhaul" to effectively support and enhance the professional learning opportunities for elementary school teachers. The following comments address this issue:

> I should have realized that, just as I used my supervision skills from one subject area to another in high school, the same principle would apply in the elementary school. There were, however, some important differences that affected what I would see during a classroom observation. The elementary principal must be ready to observe classes that will usually undergo several activity changes within a 30 to 40 minute "period."
>
> Furthermore, one is likely to see more activities during a specific "period" as one moves from the upper to the lower elementary school grades. As an elementary school supervisor, I have to remind myself that I should expect vastly different curriculum goals, teaching strategies, and performance expectations from the various elementary school levels. Moreover, one observes the application of different techniques (and, quite possibly, different education philosophies) on three general levels: kindergarten, primary, and intermediate. (Alvy, 1993, p. 29)

Final Thoughts on Supervision and Evaluation

Certainly, an effective supervisory process makes a principal a better evaluator when summative evaluations are required. With a good process, there should be few surprises. Teachers most often respect the process because the principal is familiar with their teaching style, has engaged in conversations with them on teaching, and has seen student performance and work in their classrooms. Probably the most valuable part of the process in helping the principal reflect for the summative evaluation is the teacher analysis of his or her own performance, because the analysis reveals much about one's desire and ability to understand the classroom and grow as a professional.

The teacher evaluation process should assess to what extent a given teacher meets the standards identified by the system. These standards should be developed collectively by teachers, administrators, and the board of education and be based on a working knowledge of what fosters learning. The following document is an example of an evaluation instrument based on collective standards focusing on curriculum, instruction, and classroom climate. In addition, this instrument addresses another goal of the system: ongoing professional development. The instrument examines teacher relations and communications, professional competencies and qualities, and professional growth and development.

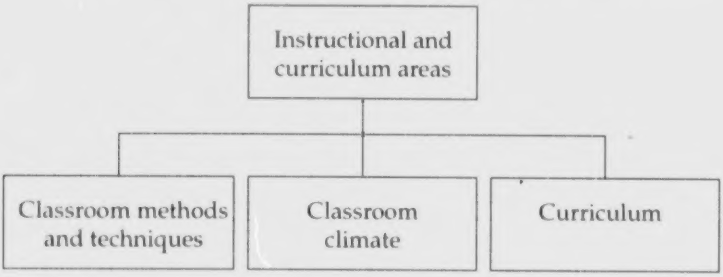
As you review the instrument, note the relationship between the elements assessed and what you know that promotes learning. Notice that the instrument is to be used yearly, which reminds employees of the ongoing growth process characteristic of a community of learners. For example, on the last page, teachers are invited to write, in concert with the principal, professional growth goals.

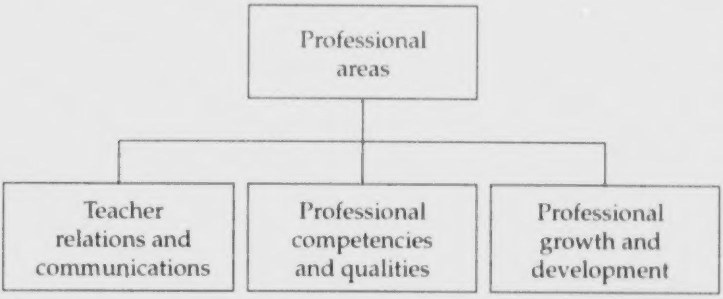
Together, the supervision and evaluation processes work to focus both the teacher and the principal in an examination of what contributes to learning for both student and adult. Collectively, these processes can and should support the school's vision of professional growth and student learning.

Teacher Performance Evaluation Form[1]

This form will be used for teacher performance evaluation. The form is a definitive guide regarding performance expectations. Although the form is a summative evaluation instrument to be used annually, it should be considered throughout the year in conferences and observations between teachers and principals. It is recommended that a minimum of two observations, followed by conferences, be made annually prior to completion of the evaluation.

The model below graphically indicates key aspects of the form.


Instructional and curriculum areas
Classroom methods and techniques
Classroom climate
Curriculum


Professional areas
Teacher relations and communications
Professional competencies and qualities
Professional growth and development

Since the evaluation of the teacher will be based primarily on classroom observations, the formal observation (an observation that includes a follow-up conference) dates—to be recorded below—will serve as an important record for this evaluation instrument.

Dates of Observations:

Teacher Performance Evaluation Form

Teacher's Name ______________________________

The competencies following the instructional and curriculum areas and the professional areas are considered important performance indicators. Thus, this evaluation form, by providing performance indicators, serves as a guideline concerning expectations of teachers. The indicators are used as the measure for the overall comments in each area.

A. Instructional and Curriculum Areas

1. *Classroom Methods and Techniques*
    a. Exhibits clarity and precision of oral and written language in lesson presentation
    b. Plans organized lessons and at the appropriate level
    c. Remains focused on the lesson objective
    d. Uses a variety of instructional techniques and materials adapting to various learning styles
    e. Promotes activities that maximize time use and engage the whole class
    f. Provides the appropriate input or modeling to teach the new material
    g. Checks for understanding and, accordingly, varies the pace of instruction
    h. Provides guided and independent practice of new learning
    i. Demonstrates skillful questioning techniques
    j. Strives to achieve higher order thinking
    k. Uses a variety of techniques to assess progress

    Comments:

2. *Classroom Climate*
    a. Provides opportunities for all students to learn and experience success
    b. Fosters self-motivated learning and effective study practices in and out of the classroom
    c. Encourages and recognizes desirable behavior through positive-reinforcement strategies

d. Uses techniques that help students develop a healthy self-concept
e. Communicates often with students and encourages classroom dialogue
f. Maintains a classroom atmosphere that motivates, challenges, and fosters high student expectations
g. Displays interest in the whole child by encouraging both cognitive and affective development
h. Demonstrates an appreciation of both individual and cooperative efforts
i. Encourages tolerance for and acceptance of the various cultures represented by the student body

Comments:

3. *Curriculum*
   a. Displays breadth and depth of subject matter knowledge
   b. Develops age-appropriate content and skills objectives based on school philosophy and adopted curriculum
   c. Aligns curriculum content with appropriate teaching and assessment strategies
   d. Adjusts the pacing of instruction to meet the needs of the international student body
   e. Encourages content area competency through reading, writing, listening, and oral communication skills
   f. Works closely on curriculum planning and development with appropriate teachers and administrators
   g. Works to integrate the curriculum, as appropriate

   Comments:

B. Professional Areas

1. *Teacher Relations and Communication*
   a. Seeks to improve the school program and climate through cooperation and constructive recommendations
   b. Shows tolerance for peer differences

c. Communicates effectively with appropriate staff when student concerns arise
d. Projects a positive image of the total school program in the community
e. Communicates effectively with parents
f. Seeks advice and counsel when needed from supervisors and other teachers
g. Shares experiences, ideas, and knowledge with staff
h. Uses established channels of communication

Comments:

2. *Professional Competencies and Qualities*
    a. Displays dependability in attendance and exhibits punctuality
    b. Shows, as a role model for students, good judgment, a professional attitude, and ethical behavior in all school-related matters
    c. Displays competency in oral and written expression
    d. Keeps accurate classroom records and submits reports and records punctually
    e. Adheres to Board policy, administrative procedures, and the organizational structure of the school

Comments:

3. *Professional Growth and Development*
    a. Continues to develop skills and competencies
    b. Establishes goals for professional development
    c. Exhibits openness to suggestions, constructive criticism, and change
    d. Displays resourcefulness and initiative
    e. Engages in projects that strengthen the overall school program

Comments:

Summary Comments:

Recommendations for Growth (based on administrative-teacher dialogue):

Date	Supervisor's Signature

Teacher Comments: (optional)

Date	Teacher's Signature

NOTE

1. The document was developed at the American Embassy School, New Delhi, India.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. What are your thoughts regarding the broad definition of supervision provided in this chapter? For example, do you think the definition is realistic?
2. What would be the various considerations when observing and conferencing the new teacher? The experienced teacher? What other teacher profiles should be considered?
3. How do you feel about supervising teachers, specifically about their teaching?
4. What would be two or three of your individual goals as a supervisor?
5. For the veteran principal: How have you grown as a supervisor? What areas do you need to strengthen?
6. Consider the pros and cons of using an evaluation instrument such as the one introduced in this chapter.
7. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

10

Maximizing Feedback About Teaching: Differentiated Professional Growth Options

Thinking improves when people interact with each other, when they break routine by experimenting, when they observe others at work, and when they assess and revise their own options. A cause beyond oneself becomes the norm, and the school becomes successful.

GLICKMAN (1990, p. 57)

Reflections on Feedback

Invited feedback about teaching provides data to the teacher about the use of particular curricular, instructional, and classroom management practices and their consequences. The data provide a lens through which a teacher can reflect and examine his or her own behaviors in relation to their intended effects. It also provides the basis for a dialogue among colleagues about the thinking involved in planning and delivering instruction. Through the process of feedback, the teacher determines what might be done differently if the lesson was to be taught again. This analysis fosters professional growth, instructional excellence, and ultimately student learning.

Traditionally, feedback about instruction, other than student to teacher, has occurred during supervision. Carl Glickman (1990), when addressing the topic of supervision, referred to a "super vision" of effective instruction. This play on words provides a helpful perspective on supervision and its ultimate capacity-building capability. Supervision is a growth-oriented process designed to enhance instruction and curriculum primarily as a result of feedback based on classroom observation. Over time, it contributes to developing the thought process about teaching.

The Situation: Moving Toward Collaborative Feedback

Until recently, the supervisory process has been conceptualized as occurring between a principal or supervisor and a teacher. Lately, however, with the focus on the school as a "collaborative workplace" or as a "community of learners," many have raised the question about whether the supervisory process should be limited to occurring only between teacher and principal or if it should be collaborative as well, to complement the cooperative goal structure of the school. The notion here is that teachers, working closely with students on a daily basis, have the capacity to provide one another with meaningful feedback.

Proponents of this belief point to the fact that in some settings, the individualistic nature of supervision, only occurring between principal and teacher, is inconsistent with the conceptualization of the school as a learning community, where shared discussion and analysis of teaching among colleagues is encouraged. There is much evidence to show that given the numerous demands on the principal's role, there is limited time for supervisory visits. Hence, with the exception of classroom visits that may occur during management by wandering around, meaningful feedback about teaching, in many settings, becomes rather spotty. If teachers have the option of seeking feedback from other sources—colleagues, students, and self, in addition to the principal—the process of continuous improvement, based on frequent opportunities to receive feedback, will be enhanced. Furthermore, a collaborative process provides an avenue through which to tap the rich knowledge base about teaching that exists in individual classrooms.

In spite of the powerful argument for a collaborative approach, some teachers have expressed a desire to maintain the option of receiving the more traditional form of supervisory feedback from one's immediate supervisor.

Together, these points of view about traditional and collaborative practices have led to the accommodation of both in the development of a system of differentiated professional growth options.

Differentiated Professional Growth Options: How the System Works

The process of differentiated professional growth options involves teachers and administrative staff developing professional growth goals for themselves and determining, from a menu of options, how they wish to pursue these goals.

The "menu" might include the following options:

- Clinical supervision
- Cognitive coaching
- Video analysis
- Drop-in visit
- Archaeological dig
- Program planning and delivery analysis
- Reflective journals
- Portfolios
- Peer coaching
- Problem solving
- Action research
- Study groups
- Professional book talks
- Individual professional growth plans

In some settings, where a high degree of trust exists, these professional growth goals are shared so that staff members become aware of others' interest areas. This can become the basis for shared work and networking. In other settings, the principal may share his or her goals with the staff and then meet individually with teachers. Depending on the system and its policies, the principal usually has the final decision-making power in the process of determining how goals might be met. In the instance where a staff member needs more direct guidance, this should be provided, especially for nontenured staff.

The differentiated approach creates positive attitudes and perceptions about teacher-initiated professional growth and creates a schoolwide focus on what contributes to cognition and the development of affective skills. As faculty members experience an environment where reflection, professional dialogue, collaborative study of teaching, and self-analysis have become treasured values of the occupational culture, they experience learning about learning and learning about themselves. Collectively, these insights help to sensitize staff to the need to replicate, in the classroom for students, those same conditions they have personally experienced.

Sources of Feedback: Categories and Approaches

There are several sources of feedback: supervisor, principal, peers, self, consultants, parents, or students. To address professional growth goals, one may select from a combination of these. The following paragraphs detail a variety of approaches to providing feedback. Who engages in each of these is largely a decision of the person defining how his or her professional goals will be addressed.

Clinical supervision. This approach, described in detail in chapter 9, involves primarily a preconference, observation, reflections, and postobservation conference. Discussion and analysis of teaching should be based on a common framework of language such as the Hunter Model. The goal of this process is to assist and support teachers as reflective classroom decision makers.

Cognitive coaching. This is a

> Non-judgmental process built around *a planning conference, observation, and a reflecting conference.* It is not dependent on a common language. Rather, it involves the use of clarifying questions, pressing for specificity, reframing, and other communication tools so that colleagues who don't share a common language can still communicate. Anyone in the educational setting can become a cognitive coach—teachers, administrators, department chairs, or support personnel. A coaching relationship may be established between teachers and teachers, administrators and teachers, and/or administrators and fellow administrators. (Costa & Garmston, 1994, p. 2)

In some districts, cognitive coaching skills are being used by school secretaries, counselors, bus drivers, aides, students, parents, playground supervisors, and cafeteria workers to enhance communication and establish trusting relationships. The goals of cognitive coaching, according to Costa and Garmston (1994), are "establishing and maintaining trust, facilitating mutual learning and enhancing growth toward holonomy [which is defined as] individuals acting autonomously while simultaneously acting interdependently with the group" (p. 13).

Video analysis. This involves an individual videotaping himself or herself, either reviewing the tape alone or with colleagues, and reflecting on the thinking, behavior, and outcomes derived from the performance.

Drop-in visit. This activity usually occurs when an individual drops in to a classroom meeting or presentation and leaves a note containing an observation or probing question.

Archaeological dig. The "dig" involves examining artifacts from lessons, professional growth activities, programs, meetings, or other events and having conversations about them. The goal of the dialogue is to stimulate reflection and thinking about practice.

Program planning and delivery analysis. In addition to performance in the classroom, teachers demonstrate professional growth and expertise in planning and presenting sessions for others. For example, a team of teachers planned a professional development day for their colleagues. Another teacher coordinated the planning of a math, science, and technology exhibition. These "performances" can also provide a basis for observation and dialogue.

Reflective journals. Time for reflection fosters analysis. Writing about thoughts and perceptions after experiences causes one to think about behaviors and consequences. For example, when a teacher or principal thinks about instructional and curricular planning in relation to the outcomes derived, this activity promotes an analysis that adds to his or her own knowledge base about what promotes learning. The ability to think critically about one's professional performance is a cultivated skill that enables one to grow. This also entails, at times, exposing one's inadequacies and reaching out to other sources of knowledge (if journals are shared) within and outside of the school in order to solve instructional dilemmas. Journal formats may include a variety of forms: freewriting, mapping, interactive journals, reaction, contemplation, elaboration, or cause-and-effect. Once journal writing becomes a regular professional practice, one's mind will, as a consequence, usually increase its capacity to reflect. As one looks through past writings, often growth and insights are noted that become cause for celebration!

Portfolios. The portfolio approach is designed to promote reflection and analysis as well as to demonstrate professional growth. Portfolios are generally a collection of artifacts that represent growth in thinking, planning, delivering, and assessing teaching. They might also demonstrate growth in a particular area such as meeting planning or interdisciplinary planning. Portfolios should not simply be scrapbooks of lesson plans and student work, but rather they should demonstrate progress. Many teachers who have used this approach have elected to demonstrate a portfolio theme. Typical contents of a portfolio may be an audiotape, videotape, student work, lesson plans, samples of tasks, and snapshots. Sometimes student or parent letters or graduate work related to the portfolio theme are included.

Peer coaching. Peer coaching occurs when a pair or trio of colleagues with similar role status join together to preconference, observe, and postconference with one another. Often, the cognitive coaching model is employed. It is critical that the "inviting teacher," who requests feedback, steers the focus of the observation and determines the parameters of the discussion.

Problem solving. Sessions are designed to encourage staff to share problems and collaboratively problem solve in a way that fosters learning. A variety of problem-solving approaches may be used. Not only do staff members learn as a result of this process but they also use the problem-solving tools in their classrooms and meetings.

Action research. Staff members who elect to participate in action research select an area of focus, develop a research question, identify a data collection plan, and create a plan for analysis of data. They identify who will assist in data collection analysis and how findings will be posted and used. Data are collected and analyzed. Findings are described, summarized, and reported.

Study groups. This structure provides staff with the opportunity to select a topic or theme and identify ways that they will study it. For example, some study groups have identified the theme of "working with at-risk youth." Their mechanisms for studying included discussions of current practice, analysis of case studies, selected journal readings, a field trip to a local prison and dialogue with prisoners, and the reading of books. Members of the group kept journals about insights and experiences. As they learned and applied ideas and practices in the classroom, they frequently met to share experiences. Some teachers and administrators decided to begin student study groups as a result of their experiences as adult learners.

Professional book talks. These talks center around a particular book or article series in which staff members voluntarily indicate interest. At one school, for example, a book talk was organized to meet once a week for a month using Jane Healy's book, *Endangered Minds: Why Our Children Don't Think* (Simon & Schuster, 1990) as a focus for discussion. At another school, a book talk was organized around Howard Gardner's *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (Basic Books, 1985).

Individual professional growth plans. This growth option is to accommodate the individual who prefers to pursue an independent study. For example, one teacher wanted to increase his instructional repertoire. He chose to read a book by Bruce Joyce and Marsh Weil titled *Models of Teaching* (Prentice Hall, 1972). He visited classrooms where *Models of Teaching* was being used. He rented, watched, and analyzed videotapes of *Models of Teaching*. With this background, he began writing lesson plans to employ these models in daily teaching. He kept samples of his plans and student work associated with these lessons in a portfolio.

Self-Assessment: Establishing Benchmarks of Progress

In addition to developing professional growth goals and identifying what approaches will be used to address them, it is important that each staff member who participates in a differentiated professional growth options program identifies benchmarks of progress with dates of completion. For example, an early portfolio benchmark might be the development of the case where artifacts are to be stored. Another might be the creation of a portfolio theme or goal. In addition to benchmarks, resources needed—human and material—should be noted. The benchmark target dates should be reviewed quarterly and progress celebrated.

Individual Reflection and Institutional Renewal

It has been said that an event does not become an experience until one has time to reflect. Reflection is a precious resource in settings where most of the activities are characterized as fast paced, involving a constant stream of decision making. The tools for differentiated professional growth options are many. They provide choice for different types of adult learners at a variety of stages in their careers with a variety of interests. What they have in common is the capacity to foster reflection, and potentially, an enduring desire to learn more about educational craft.

Implementing a system of professional growth options provides a recognition of the need to nourish the professional growth of every individual in the school and to stimulate a collaborative effort to pursue learning about learning. Through this process, the entire institution becomes a richer knowledge source with increased capacity to serve its adult and student learners.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. How does the concept of differentiated professional growth options fit with your philosophy regarding professional growth?
2. What might be some advantages and disadvantages?
3. Which options would you select for yourself and why?
4. What professional growth options do you prefer? Would you add any?
5. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

11

Building a Collaborative School

What does ethical leadership mean? For me as a practitioner it means promoting democratic values and beliefs within the school community through collegiality and shared decision making. It also means showing respect for teachers and students, and recognizing that teachers are experts in curriculum and instruction. In the classroom, ethical leadership means encouraging respect for each student and helping students to do their best, share ideas, and take risks as they learn and work individually and cooperatively.

A PRINCIPAL'S VOICE

Portrait of a Collaborative School

Imagine a school where teachers work on teams to design curriculum; plan instruction; develop authentic assessment tasks based on specific, agreed-on standards; problem solve; counsel students; support each other; and teach. They collaborate in designing and participating in professional growth activities. As a part of this effort, they peer coach with one another—their focus is learning about learning. When one walks into the faculty room, the dialogue is about teaching and learning. There is a parent-teacher-student organization that meets regularly and has as a focus for their work, collaboration to support learning. When one visits classrooms, often cooperative learning is observed. The students experience, at a classroom level, the same type of collaboration that adults model at a building level. Teachers work with students on the student council. Support staff, including bus drivers, cafeteria workers, instructional and library aides, office personnel, and playground supervisors, frequently meet to receive training and to discuss how they can facilitate and enhance the learning process.

Administrators and instructional staff meet frequently and share decision making to promote better and lasting decisions about the quality of the workplace and learning. There is open communication at all levels. Trust exists. People are committed to values, beliefs, and activities that focus on learning.

This school or collaborative center for learning extends its activities to include partnerships with the community and local businesses. There is two-way dialogue about what skills students need to be successful in both school and life. Community members attend school activities, and school community members take part in local civic activities. Business leaders and school staff attend shared professional development activities.

There are learning fairs where all who contribute to learning are recognized and celebrated for their efforts.

An Image of Reality

The above scenario is far from reality in most schools. The history of the teaching profession is rooted in norms of isolation, stemming from the original "school"—an isolated one-room schoolhouse.

Thus professional isolation is a condition familiar to most teachers. And so it is that in many of today's schools, this one-room schoolhouse structure is repeated every few yards down the corridor. In fact, Maeroff (1993) concluded that teachers go about their jobs as if each classroom were a separate building. Although classroom endeavors are largely communal—one teacher interacting with several students simultaneously—professional interactions within schools tend, for the most part, to be one-on-one. A principal meets with a teacher in a supervisory visit or communicates about a particular student. A teacher inquires of another about a particular curricular issue. Teaching, in the main, tends to be a solitary, private act with regard to adult interaction. Total faculty gatherings, for professional interaction, tend to be infrequent. In many cases, there are agreements that time for total faculty meetings be limited to once a month, or in some schools, once a semester!

Perceived as an intrusion on planning time or, as a result of past experiences, not worthwhile, time for professional collaboration—

joint work among colleagues—is limited and rare within most workplaces.

Recognition traditions tend to be individualistic as well: for example, "Teacher of the Year," "Staff Member of the Month." Success is defined as making it alone. As a result of these conditions and traditions, teachers seldom have the opportunity to experience the benefits of collaborative work and, as a consequence, lack the values and beliefs necessary to sustain collaboration. It seems ironic that the very individuals who are being asked to foster cooperative learning experiences for the students in their classrooms are not encouraged to promote similar experiences with their professional colleagues. This lack of personal experience, in some instances, limits one's awareness of some of the subtleties that influence collaboration as well as the feelings and opportunities it brings.

The Case for Collaboration

Teachers report that for a variety of reasons, their work is becoming increasingly difficult. Many report that students of today have different needs and problems than those who occupied classrooms during their preservice years and initial years of practice. A large number of teachers speak of increasing classroom demands and a discontented public. It would seem that these difficult times point to the need for colleagues to join together in addressing them to ease the individual burden they pose.

Moreover, research and experience tell us that collaboration makes a difference. Roland Barth, as Director of the Principal's Center at Harvard University, once shared with a convocation of principals, "Four years of public school teaching—and 10 years as a principal—convince me that the nature of relationships among adults who inhabit a school has more to do with a school's quality and character, the accomplishments of its pupils, and the professionalism of its teachers than any other factor."

Judith Warren Little (1982), in a keynote address to Napa mentor teachers in Napa, California, observed that in collaborative settings, such as the teachers' room, when the dialogue focused on teaching and learning, the school typically was improving. This was not the case when the talk focused on griping about students, administration, or one another.

Similarly, Susan Rosenholtz (1989) studied 78 schools and characterized these schools as "stuck," "in-between," and "moving." The moving schools were found to be learning enriched. Their environments were characterized by a shared purpose and direction, teacher collaboration, teacher on-the-job learning, and teacher certainty (efficacy). In these settings, there was evidence of teacher commitment and student learning. In her study, Rosenholtz (1989) noted,

> In the choreography of collaborative schools, norms of self-reliance appeared to be selfish infractions against the school community. With teaching defined as inherently difficult, many minds tended to work better than a few. Here requests for and offers of advice and assistance seemed like moral imperatives and colleagues seldom acted without foresight and deliberate calculation. Teacher leaders . . . reached out to others with encouragement, technical knowledge to solve classroom problems, and enthusiasm for learning new things. (p. 208)

In the learning-enriched settings, Rosenholtz found that principals played a critical role in contributing to "an abundant spirit of continuous improvement" where no one ever stopped learning. They did this through "frequent and useful evaluations which seemed also a powerful mechanism for delivery on the promise of school improvement as they also served as guides for future work." In addition to evaluation, these principals often orchestrated collaborative relations between more and less successful teachers. Teachers came to realize that these relationships helped contribute to classroom success. Having experienced the power of these alliances with other professionals, teachers desired to continue such relationships.

Collaborative principals were found who "uniquely rewove schools that had come altogether unraveled" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 208). In contrast, principals who seemed

> Unsure of their technical knowledge and concerned with their own self-esteem, did teachers and students an enormous disservice. In protecting their turf, even the smallest attempts by teachers to solve school or classroom problems were met by distance, intimidation, or defeat. Most often, it was here teachers learned the unassailable lesson that they

> must shoulder classroom burdens by themselves . . . no teacher could impose upon another. (p. 207)

In an article titled "How Our Schools Could Be," Deborah Meier (1995) emphasized

> When schools see themselves as membership communities, not service organizations, parents and teachers discuss ideas, argue about purposes and exercise judgement, because taking responsibility for making important decisions is at the heart of what it means to be well educated. Students can't learn unless the adults who must show them the way practice what they preach. (pp. 369-370)

Thus proponents of the research on collaboration and those experienced in it purport "together, we are better than alone." Yet achieving the goal of collaboration is a distant target in most schools. Therefore, the movement toward it must be gradual. Gradual change allows for the provision of experiences so that individuals have the opportunity to participate in collective activities that will build the necessary values, beliefs, and desire for continued collaboration.

Moving Toward Collaboration

Because the collaborative experience tends to be an uncommon one, the initial activities designed to foster the development of values and desires for collaborative work and, eventually, the creation of norms for collaborative practice need to be introduced, facilitated, and structured by someone or some group outside or within the organization. Expect resistance. Staff members do not always perceive the need for this type of experience. Collaboration may be a foreign activity. People may not see a purpose for collaboration and view it as an invasion of privacy. Furthermore, adults have a lot to lose—especially their professional image and self-esteem. It is important that a staff's initial experiences with collaboration do not require them to put their professional selves on the line. Rather, the experiences should be designed to be "low risk," that is, activities that do not require the participant to expose professional knowledge, skills, or talent. Initially, these may be congenial activities, such as breakfasts, games, or potlucks; later, they should be more collegial in nature, such as planning a field trip or discussing curriculum. As individuals become more comfortable with one another, they will also be more willing to expose their professional selves. As they benefit from this type of collegial activity, they may come to value and seek additional opportunities for collaboration with colleagues. As individual values and beliefs within organizations begin to change, the organizations change. New traditions and collaborative practices will emerge as individual values that celebrate collective action develop.

An example of this comes from Central Park East Secondary School in New York City.

> Another priority for us was creating a setting in which all members of the community were expected to engage in the discussion of ideas and in "the having of their wonderful ideas," as Eleanor Duckworth (from Harvard University) has put it . . . One of our most prominently stated, up-front aims was the cultivation of what we came to call "Habits of Mind"—habits that apply to all academic and nonacademic subject matter and to all thoughtful human activities. The five we came up with are not exhaustive, but they suggest the kinds of questions that we believed a well-educated person raises about his or her world.
>
> - How do we know what we think we know? What's our evidence? How credible is it?
> - Whose viewpoint are we hearing, reading, seeing? What other viewpoints might there be if we changed our position—our perspective?
> - How is one thing connected to another? Is there a pattern here?
> - How else might it have been? What if? Supposing that?
> - What difference does it make? Who cares?
>
> In order to carry out our basic mission of teaching students to use their minds well and preparing them to live productive, socially useful and personally satisfying lives, we approach curriculum with these habits as a backdrop and specific "essential questions" at the core. (Meier, 1995, p. 371)

Necessary Conditions for a Collaborative School

In a collaborative school, all staff members engage in the study of learning and those practices that facilitate the learning process. In a sense, the school becomes a learning community with a focus on continuous improvement. For profound learning to occur—whether by students or adults—an individual must

- Acknowledge areas in need of improvement
- Pose the problems
- Take risks
- Use humor
- Collaborate with other learners
- Demonstrate compassion
- Model learning
- Maintain a focus on learning

Yet, in many schools, individuals would not feel safe to demonstrate these behaviors. In schools where cultures of isolation exist, the path to collaboration requires that staff members change the way they think and relate to one another. One principal commented, "You want people to feel 'Hey, I'm part of this,' but it's hard to do when what is modeled is 'dog eat dog.' "

Additionally, *time* for collaboration, *training* in strategies and guidelines for collaborative work, *trust* among all involved in the collective enterprise, and *tangible* support (in word and deed) must be provided for norms of collaboration to develop and thrive. "Teachers are more likely to cooperate when barriers to common action are removed and they feel their problems are shared" (Little & Bird, 1984). When this is the case, teachers, inspired by a common purpose, may be able to bring about change at both the classroom and school level.

Critical to the development of a collaborative school is the notion that collaboration cannot be forced. Therefore, groups of colleagues who desire joint work should be supported with resources to pursue it. Others, who have not yet developed values for collaboration, may be exposed to opportunities for collective action without the expectation of participation. One school developed a norm that proposed: "Everyone has the right to participate. No one must. If you choose not to, however, you must go along with decisions of the collective group.

If you choose to disagree verbally, we will take time with you to work out the disagreement" (Wells Junior High School, Wells, Maine).

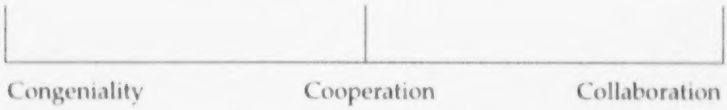
The focus of collaborative work must be its ultimate impact on the student. To that end, colleagues must engage in work that ultimately leads to a heightened awareness of the conditions necessary for learning to occur. Maeroff (1993) asserts that a faculty can be renewed intellectually if it views change as a team or collaborative endeavor. Moreover, as staff members gain comfort with the process of change, the actual process can become as natural as the desire to improve one's teaching and student learning. In a collaborative workplace focused on learning, all staff would assume some responsibility for the professional welfare and growth of both students and colleagues. For this to exist, however, requires—for many schools—a fundamental change in the school's culture.

In a collaborative culture, the core values, which are reflected in the practices, reward structures, rules, sanctions, and traditions of the school, must be characterized by a spirit of curiosity about teaching and learning and a belief in joint work. When such a culture exists, staff members join together to share the responsibility of integrating the curriculum, working with special needs of at-risk pupils, problem solving classroom frustrations, developing reflective and analytical skills of students, and creating meaningful academic tasks. They also celebrate one another's accomplishments and share the learning implicit in these feats. This recognition also serves as an intrinsic motivator, creates synergy, and perpetuates the belief that together we are better than alone. Cooperative goal structures are, as a consequence, reinforced and advanced.

Each school differs in how it evolves to become a culture characterized by collaboration. Leadership, the history of professional development, experiences of the staff, and existing norms, values, and beliefs will influence how the development of a collaborative workplace begins. However, there are some specific activities that tend to take place in a developmental way. Collaboration tends to emerge as staff members move from relationships characterized by congeniality, to cooperation, and then to collegiality. How much time is spent in each of these stages will be a function of the existing characteristics of an individual school.

For example, the collegiality that exists when staff members collaborate is not created overnight. In fact, the building blocks for collegiality go beyond work and take considerable time. Thus, when a school principal visits a teacher or other staff member who has experienced a family crisis or is recovering from a serious operation or accident, he or she often finds that sharing the moment of crisis is invaluable in building professional trust. At times, several activities—some congenial, some cooperative, some collegial—might go on simultaneously.

A teacher and principal reflecting on how their staff grew to become a collaborative one noted, "We had come to know each other as human beings . . . sharing about our families, interests, and sports. This was essential to build the trust so you can bare your soul with your colleagues and say, 'Here's the problem.' To be intellectually honest requires a foundation of trust." They described a continuum:



This continuum is significant in that it reminds one that if a basic respect for one another as human beings does not exist, people will have a more difficult time collaborating.

Hargreaves and Dawe (1989) provide a useful typology for considering the impact of school culture on the development of a collaborative workplace. They suggest that there are four types of cultures:

- Fragmented individualism—the traditional form of teacher isolation
- Balkanization—consisting of subgroups and cliques operating as separate subentities
- Contrived collegiality—leading to a proliferation of unwanted contacts among teachers that consume already scarce time with little to show for it
- True collaborative cultures—"deep personal enduring cultures central to teachers' daily work" (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1989, p. 14)

Thinking about these cultures, one could assume that if the nature of relationships among adults in a school was characterized by individualism or Balkanization, it is very probable that individuals would not take much of a risk when it came to revealing their professional selves in working with others. Therefore, when planning activities to foster the development of a collaborative workplace, low-risk activities in which individuals' professional knowledge was not at stake would be more likely to engage staff members than high-risk activities in which individuals might be asked to display their knowledge publicly. Cultures in which contrived collegiality exists might be transformed by inviting staff members to come together and share activities that have personal meaning for each of them. Here the matter of creating choice versus delivering top-down mandated initiatives, such as interdisciplinary curriculum or peer coaching, is essential.

The following portrays a range of activities and examples as well as illustrates the difference between congenial tasks and collegial tasks.

Congenial activities. These are designed to create a sense of comfort with one another as human beings. The experiences typically are not professionally focused. Examples might include potluck lunches, volleyball games, swap meets to exchange educational resources, or Friday afternoon gatherings.

Collegial, professionally focused experiences. These develop interest, respect, and cooperation among and between individuals as colleagues. The focus of these interactions tend to be the curriculum, instructional practice, and assessment. These are represented by a broad range of activities:

1. Low-risk activities that do not require participants to expose their professional knowledge and skills. Rather, these activities are designed to raise an awareness of the value of multiple perspectives and a realization of the resources that may exist beyond one's classroom door in neighboring classrooms. These tend to create a desire for collaborative work. Examples might include a Socratic seminar focused on poetry or a work of art.
2. Group process and communication skills sessions, during which staff members build their own ground rules regarding how they will treat one another while working collaboratively, learn about how to facilitate collegial work, and learn about the subtleties of communication. These sessions would also include information about group development,

conflict resolution, consensus building, and problem-solving models.

3. Medium-risk activities that require professionals to expose some of their professional knowledge and skills. These activities generally occur outside of one's classroom and may include such tasks as professional sharing of successful practices, problem solving, or curriculum articulation or integration. These tend to build a desire for more knowledge about content areas or teaching practices.
4. Professional development sessions that provide information about either content areas or instructional practices and their consequences. Examples of these might include workshops about teaching reading or writing across the content areas, using technology in the curriculum, research on memory, or models of teaching.
5. High-risk activities that require professionals to expose their professional knowledge and skills. These might include the rigorous examination of teaching or curricular practices and their consequences. Training to prepare staff members for this type of collegial work might include sessions on conferencing skills, classroom observations, and data collection. An example of a high-risk activity might include peer coaching or mentoring.
6. Study groups focused on shared interests to ensure the ongoing nature of collegial work.
7. Collaborative action research projects in which professional colleagues formulate research questions, develop a plan to collect and analyze data, collect data, analyze them, summarize and publicize their findings, and identify new questions that may have emerged.

Because there is an intrinsic similarity between the goals of the activities discussed in the previous list and the goals of supervision—the development of knowledge and practices regarding staff and student learning—in some schools that have actualized true collaborative cultures, these activities have become a way of addressing the professional growth goals of individual teachers identified during the initial supervisory conference. This concept is discussed at length in chapter 10.

A Spectrum of Activities

The descriptions that follow provide more detailed examples of low-, medium-, and high-risk activities designed to build the values necessary for a collaborative school. Principals, teachers, and support personnel have used these activities during faculty meetings, team department meetings, and inservices. The broad goal of their use is to provide experiences to develop values for collaboration that will lead to joint work among professionals versus seeking to "infuse" these values.

Listening posts. In listening posts, staff members are asked to generate professional topics about which they would like to chat. For example, some may wish to talk about authentic assessment; others might want to converse about whole language, interdisciplinary instruction, or behavior management, to name a few. Each topic is assigned to a specific area or "post" in the room by the facilitator. Staff members gather by the topic area of their choice and have a discussion for 15 to 30 minutes. At the end of this time, the individuals who have discussed each topic develop a 1- to 2-minute summary of their discussions and report back to the larger group. In this way, the entire group benefits from hearing about the separate topic area discussions. In fact, seeds of interest across topic areas are often planted as a consequence of such sharings.

Article sharing. Another out-of-classroom activity that brings teachers together for dialogue, sharing, and learning is a cooperative learning strategy in which articles are selected to be read. These articles usually reflect a common theme. Suppose there are five articles to read. Staff members form groups of five. Each person in a group numbers off one through five and reads a different article. Then people who have read the same article across groups (all the "ones," for instance) meet and discuss what they have read, decide on the critical points, and plan how they will share their articles with colleagues who have read different articles. Colleagues then gather in their one to five groups and each teaches about his or her article. Hence, through this activity, staff members realize that a richness exists when colleagues work together that is not possible when individuals work alone.

Carousel brainstorming. As trust begins to develop and values for collaborative work are created, staff members become more comfortable sharing professional knowledge. Carousel brainstorming promotes this type of sharing within a relatively safe context. In carousel brainstorming, four to six sheets of butcher paper are posted around the room. Topics are assigned and written on each sheet. For example, one sheet might be titled "Motivation Techniques That Work." Staff members are then divided into groups and position themselves in front of one of the sheets. They brainstorm for 3 minutes, writing onto the sheets their brainstormed ideas. They then rotate to the next sheet, taking the colored marker that has been assigned to their group with them. The process continues until each group has brainstormed at every chart. At this point, the group members walk around the entire room, reading the completed charts. Frequently, when this activity is conducted, there are requests to have the charts typed and distributed.

Helping trios. As staff members feel increasingly comfortable and trust one another, they are willing to let their rough edges show, resulting in greater adeptness in joint problem solving. Helping trios lends a structure to the problem-solving process. Peers form groups of three and designate a person as "A," another as "B," and the third as "C." During round 1, which lasts 5 minutes, A shares a problem while B and C listen. During the next 5 minutes, B and C ask clarifying questions about the problem. Finally, during the last 5 minutes, B and C offer solution ideas to A, who writes the ideas down. The process is repeated so that B and C have a chance to discuss their problems as well.

Pinwheel activity. Another problem-solving strategy that engages larger numbers of faculty is the pinwheel activity. Groups of six are formed and stand in a pinwheel configuration. That is, three people stand in the center, each facing a person in an outer circle. The three individuals in the center each pose a professional problem or dilemma they are experiencing to the person facing them. The people they face generate possible ideas about how to address the specific problem posed. After they brainstorm solution ideas for 3 minutes, the people on the outside rotate. In this way, the individuals in the center are able to gain additional ideas about how to address their problems or challenges. The process continues until each person in the center has three different sets of ideas from the three outside "consultants." Then the pinwheel is "turned inside out," and the outside people who had brainstormed solution ideas previously have a chance to share their problems and garner ideas from professional colleagues.

This process makes the staff aware that others share similar problems or challenges and that a tremendous amount of expertise exists among faculty members that begs to be tapped.

What's your bag? Teachers post questions about curriculum, instruction, special needs students, resources, or assessment on the outside of a brown lunch bag (one question per bag). The bags are stapled (leaving an opening on the top) on a bulletin board in the staff room. Blank 3" × 5" index cards are also put in a container on the bulletin board, along with a pen. Staff members are invited to respond to the bag questions using the index cards. They write ideas on the cards and drop them into the bags. Question owners read the ideas in the bag and redeposit the cards in the bag so others may read them as well.

Once a foundation of trust, comfort, and risk taking is created, the opportunities for peers to support one another through collaborative exchanges are limitless. Some additional activities might include co-planning lessons, developing curriculum materials, creating cross-age opportunities for students, devising interdisciplinary units, sharing lesson plans, examining artifacts of student work, developing authentic assessment tasks, participating in study groups, or engaging in collaborative action research around teacher-generated questions.

As joint work among colleagues continues, norms of collaboration evolve. Working together becomes "the way we do business around here," as one staff member put it. Eventually, governance structures may reflect collaboration as well. For instance, one school designed a structure called the Principal's Advisory Committee (PAC). The PAC was made up of three teachers elected by the staff and the principal. Together, they met and planned faculty meetings. The PAC members rotated responsibility for conducting the meetings as well. The teachers on the PAC provided a bridge for communication with faculty members at large. In the process of serving on the PAC, they received training in meeting management, problem solving, decision making, conflict resolution, and communication skills. Hence, in addition to serving their colleagues, they developed critical leadership skills. Other collaborative schools have adopted site-based management or shared governance structures and practices. In these collaborative structures, staff members apply a variety of skills to make school-level decisions.

The Principal and Collaboration

As noted earlier, a key factor in the development of a collaborative school is the principal's role. The principal must truly believe in and value professional collaboration for this type of work to be sustained over time. This must be reflected not only in what is said but in the actions of the principal as well. For instance, if opportunities for professional collaboration are provided, do they occur during prime time, or are they placed at the end of a meeting's agenda? Does the principal collaborate as well? Is there a budget item to support this type of endeavor? For many principals who have not experienced collaborative efforts heretofore, such activities may be uncomfortable. Some principals, for example, have indicated a discomfort with shared governance because they felt, from the district's perspective, the principal still had accountability for decisions. In these cases, many principals solved the problem by requesting staff input but reserving the right to make the final decision. So that the staff did not feel "sold out" by this, one principal first facilitated a session in which the faculty brainstormed all the decisions to be made, and these were recorded on butcher paper. The principal and the staff then labeled who would have primary responsibility for input for each one.

In other instances, although the principal sensed a degree of discomfort, it was simply acknowledged, and the principal expressed the belief that this was part of the learning process that everyone, at one time or another, experienced. Staff support for this new role was requested.

Some Final Thoughts on Collaboration

Regardless of how a collaborative organization develops, schools that are able to reach such a state report a sense of synergy, creativity, and a capacity for innovation and learning uncommon to those who function in isolation. Moreover, in true collaborative cultures, joint work among teachers has developed as a daily norm for operating. In these cultures, staff members are willing to put their professional knowledge and practices on the line to be scrutinized by their colleagues. They view one another as sources for learning.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. What additional collaborative activities would you add to those offered in this chapter?
2. Thinking about the staff of which you are a part, how would you characterize their capacity to engage in risk-taking behavior (low, medium, or high risk)? What activities might you share?
3. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

12

Asking the Right Questions About Curriculum and Instruction

When the classroom door is closed the teacher determines curriculum and instruction.

A PRINCIPAL'S VOICE

Keeping the Curriculum Relevant

The notion of the "silent curriculum" taught behind closed doors is not a new concept for the principal. Research and experience indicate that many teachers teach what they are comfortable with, and what is expedient. They often approach teaching as they have been taught.

Many members of the teaching profession examine the school curriculum (too often defined by textbooks alone), prepare for class, and largely accept the notion that the success of their instruction is a reflection of how well the curriculum is "covered." In reality, the opposite may be true. How well one teaches the curriculum is what makes the greatest impact on the learner. A teacher's attitude and enthusiasm for the curriculum send a subtle but strong message to students about the importance of learning. The process or strategies that we use teach children and adults how we feel about learning and how we learn. If lifelong learning is the vision, then what is taught and how it is taught must be considered in tandem. Generating the momentum toward accomplishing this goal is perhaps one of the greatest challenges for the principalship. To help address this challenge, we will examine both curriculum and instruction by raising significant questions throughout this chapter.

Asking the Right Questions

Principals, because of their daily interaction with students, teachers, and parents, may be in the best position to reflect on how the curriculum is affecting the total school community. From this vantage point, the principal must consider and facilitate discussion concerning the following questions and issues as curriculum and instructional decisions are made. By promoting these questions and encouraging dialogue among the staff, principals can do a great deal to keep teachers thinking about curriculum, their students, and ways of teaching.

How Should Curriculum Be Defined?

There is no one definition of curriculum that is universally accepted. For example, curriculum can mean a sequenced plan to educate students or a broad field of study (e.g., examining various curriculum models). Yet defining curriculum is a very difficult and important task, for the definition says much about the scope of school experiences that one believes have a direct impact on student learning. For example, a narrow definition of a curriculum plan usually focuses on specific classroom content and skills that can be objectively tested, whereas a broader definition moves beyond specific classroom content and skills and involves activities that have long-range implications and sometimes are not easily tested. Additionally, a broader definition implies that almost all of the actions of a classroom teacher and activities within a school may have far-reaching curriculum implications for a student.

Based on the comments and connections made in this book about a school's overall mission as a learning community for continued adult and student growth, a broad definition of curriculum is appropriate. Thus curriculum is defined as *planned and unplanned concepts, content, skills, work habits, means of assessment, attitudes, and instructional strategies taught in the classroom and the variety of school activities in and out of class that influence present and future academic, social, emotional, and physical growth of students.*

What Kind of Authentic Student Work and Results Are Essential to Prepare Students for Successful Living in a Democratic Society?

Moving from our definition of curriculum, it is important to consider student work and anticipated outcomes that go beyond school-related tasks and expectations. Each proposed outcome should answer satisfactorily the question: Will this learning help students when they are not in school, as citizens and in the workplace? According to many educators and business leaders, we must identify the skills that will be needed in the future and how to best teach those skills. For example, if we accept Drucker's (1992) view that to work successfully in an organization one must have "the ability to present ideas orally and in writing; the ability to work with people; [and] the ability to shape and direct one's own work, contribution and career" (p. 5), then we must teach the appropriate content and skills to foster these competencies.

Thus a multicultural curriculum, cooperative learning activities, independent and challenging thinking activities, and multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary activities (that include oral, written, and cross-subject analyses) become important, not because they are fashionable but because they provide essential skills that must be transferred to the workplace. Moreover, when deciding on key student learnings, it is essential that one asks, What are the specific instructional techniques and activities (e.g., cooperative learning, drafting several versions of a report, debating) that best teach specific curriculum expectations and foster applications of these learnings in the workplace? To illustrate further, in the elementary, middle, and high school-level community service programs, and in the middle and high school-level course, workplace experiences become essential links to support and highlight the connections between school and real-life experiences.

To develop relevant curriculum expectations, a structured approach that covers essential questions is very helpful. The classical Tyler Rationale still provides us with four essential questions that should be addressed by individuals and committees when developing curriculum. These questions are as follows: "a) What educational purposes should the school seek to attain? b) What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes? c) How can these educational experiences be effectively organized? d) How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?"

(Hyman, 1974, p. 40). Add to this model what we now know from research on the human brain and developments in teaching methodology, and we have the key elements to engage in a meaningful dialogue on curriculum, instruction, assessment, and learning within a school setting.

A different approach is taken by English and Hill (1994), who suggest that because of the injustices of our society, we should go beyond the present or futurist thinking when developing curriculum because we will just perpetuate the existing order: "The place to begin creating a curriculum is the world as we would wish it to be" (p. 61). Although English and Hill recommend some of the same innovations noted above (e.g., multidisciplinary curriculum), their approach is very different as they believe that our traditional curriculum models are too closely linked to the injustices fostered by the present school setting. They reject school as we know it and the traditional curriculum units and themes as too value laden and reductionist. English and Hill (1994) would move toward "arena planning," which embraces the ideas and experiences of the learner when planning curriculum and, to promote learning, is centered on personal meaning, experiences, and activities of children (pp. 65-70).

What Are the Instructional Considerations to Effectively Communicate the Curriculum to Students?

One of the keys to assuring that the curriculum content is communicated well is through sound instructional approaches. Caine and Caine (1991) present a very strong argument for basing instructional considerations on recent discoveries in research on the human brain. Central to their thesis is that the brain is constantly making connections; thus curriculum and teaching models and methodologies should emphasize learning based on an integrated curriculum, thematic teaching, thematical orchestration, and cooperative learning (pp. 118-122). Furthermore, Caine and Caine stress that as the human brain is both an emotional and a cognitive organ, it responds to motivating stimuli that immerse the learner in a variety of engaging experiences such as reading, listening, and talking (p. 6).

The recent findings from cognitive learning theory echo the work of Caine and Caine. The following seven concepts (Herman, Aschbacher, & Winters, 1992) can be extremely helpful as teachers and principals consider the development and implementation of instructional strategies to deliver curriculum.

1. Knowledge is constructed. Learning is a process of creating personal meaning from new information and prior knowledge.

   Applications: Encourage discussion of new ideas. Encourage divergent thinking and multiple solutions, not just one right answer. Use multiple modes of expression; emphasize critical thinking skills. Relate new learnings to past experiences.

2. Learning is not necessarily a linear progression of discrete skills.

   Applications: Engage students in problem solving.

3. There is great variety in learning styles, attention spans, memory, developmental paces, and intelligences.

   Applications: Provide choices in tasks and how mastery is demonstrated. Provide "think time." Do not overuse timed tests. Provide opportunities for revising and rethinking.

4. People perform better when they know the goal, see models, and know how their performance compares to the standard.

   Applications: Involve students in defining and discussing goals. Provide a range of examples of student work; discuss characteristics. Provide opportunities for student self-evaluation and peer review. Solicit student input into standards.

5. It is important to know when to use knowledge, how to adapt it, and how to manage one's own learning.

   Applications: Give real-world opportunities (or simulations) to apply or adapt new knowledge. Have students self-evaluate: How they learn, how they set new goals, and why they like certain work.

6. Motivation, effort, and self-esteem affect learning and performance.

   Applications: Encourage students to see the connection between effort and results.

7. Learning has social components. Group work is valuable.

   Applications: Provide group work. Incorporate heterogeneous groups with a variety of student roles. Consider group products and processes. (pp. 19-20)

In their classic book *Models of Teaching*, Joyce and Weil (1972) identify a wide range of teaching models. These models represent "approaches to creating environments for learning." More than 90 different strategies are identified by Joyce and Weil. They describe four different "families" or approaches to teaching into which these strategies can be categorized.

> Although there is much overlap among families (and among models within families), the four are: 1) those oriented toward social relations and toward the relation between man and his culture and which draw upon social sources (The Social Family); 2) those which draw on information processing systems and descriptions of human capacity for processing of information (Information Processing Family); 3) those which draw on personality development, the process of personal construction of reality, and the capacity to function as an integrated personality as the major source (The Personal Family); 4) those developed from an analysis of the processes by which human behavior is shaped and reinforced (Behavioral Systems Family). (Joyce & Weil, 1972, p. 8)

Examples of the social family of instruction include cooperative learning strategies such as the jigsaw or Learning Together. Information-processing strategies include such techniques as concept attainment or concept formation. An example from the personal family is synectics, designed originally as a problem-solving tool, but one that can also be used to add interest and vitality to writing. Finally, mastery learning or programmed instruction serve as strategies from the behavioral family.

In addition to *Models of Teaching*, others have developed effective tools to enhance the impact of the delivery system and curriculum content. For example, Gardner's (1985) seven different types of intelligence, Marzano et al.'s (1992) work, *Dimensions of Learning*, and Gregorc's (1985) and Butler's (1992) works on mind styles of teachers often influence the selection of teaching approaches.

Although each approach varies as to its central purpose, all contribute to enriching the toolbox from which teachers can draw to communicate curriculum effectively. Teachers are encouraged to develop a wide repertoire of teaching strategies and use a variety of techniques in their classroom to enhance the curriculum delivery system and meet the varying needs of students.

What Is the Best Way to Determine Whether Students Have Grasped the Key Curriculum Goals?

This question presents one of the most difficult and controversial issues in education: the eternal debate over standardized tests and alternative assessment. This debate centers around finding the best way to judge what students know and are able to do. Unless we are satisfied with the ways of assessing students, curriculum accountability will always be questioned. Standardized tests give us some insight into how students in each school rate when compared to each other and to students in other schools. This may be helpful. However, we need to go further if each teacher's expertise about his or her class is to count—and if we are to identify the diverse strengths and needs of each student. The quality of testing, the assessment, may need to vary in each class. Thus a major part of a school's discussion on curriculum must be to develop learning tasks on each grade level that indicate whether students have grasped the essentials of the curriculum. Clearly, assessment is not separate from curriculum and instruction.

Probably one of the richest activities for a teaching staff is to develop acceptable performance standards and performance tasks to be assessed. To illustrate, let us assume that an 11th-grade American history class has just studied the governmental system of checks and balances. Instead of giving a traditional essay exam to assess their knowledge of the system, why not try a simulation activity in which groups of students represent the three branches of government (e.g., presidential, congressional, and judicial) and debate over which branch or branches of government should be responsible for handling scenarios presented by the teacher? Before beginning the activity, a teacher should have a strong sense of which concepts are critical for understanding. The activity should be structured so students have an opportunity to display and reinforce their understanding of the concepts. For example, When does a police action by our military become a war? or What role does each branch of government play if America is fighting a war? This will give students an opportunity to really wrestle with issues, debate, think on their feet, and see the different interpretations that are possible. This type of performance task adds some credibility to those trying to address the following concern: The focus should be on developing student tasks that can give us insight into how students in 5 years may apply what they have learned today. Such a task also presents opportunities for students to practice critical thinking, decision-making, public speaking, and listening skills in addition to demonstrating knowledge about branches of government.

The positive response of so many teachers to alternative assessment strategies probably indicates a realization that the search for ways to authenticate learning has brought greater meaning to both teachers and students. Principals would be wise to encourage these explorations if teachers are taking ownership of the various strategies to pursue meaningful curriculum goals. Portfolio assessment, for example, has enabled teachers to see significant growth over time and has encouraged students to take greater ownership and reflect more on their work (Tierney, Carter, & Desai, 1991).

Gardner's multiple intelligence theory has increased interest in various assessment strategies to give students an opportunity to display their talents. To illustrate, Armstrong (1994) has cited anecdotal records, work samples, audiocassettes, videotapes, photography, student journals, sociograms, informal tests, and student interviews as suitable ways to demonstrate understanding through a multiple intelligence approach (pp. 116-123). Finally, having students write their own homework or test questions or use learning logs, webbing, and semantic mapping are all indicators that teachers continue to search in creative ways to help determine how best to find out whether students have grasped the curriculum goals.

How Can a Principal Help to Keep a Conversation on Curriculum Active?

Principals can promote this process by providing a forum through monthly grade-level or department meetings devoted at least partially to answering questions already raised in this chapter and others, such as the following: Is our curriculum relevant? Are we accomplishing our primary curriculum objectives? Are we behind? Ahead? What can we leave out without hurting the program? The idea is not just to "cover" the curriculum but to address the essential components of the curriculum necessary for students to succeed in present and in future grades—and more important, in life. We hear often that "less is more." If we accept this notion, then selecting key learning objectives and focusing on those objectives should be a much greater concern than "touching" on each chapter recommended in a textbook.

The principal needs to facilitate the development of a forum so teachers interact across grade levels to align and articulate the curriculum. First-grade teachers must meet with second-grade teachers and ask about expectations and how they can meet student needs across grade levels. In middle school and high school, subject area specialists should do the same so important content skills and concepts are not overlooked and subject area fragmentation is minimized. Discussions of this kind across the curriculum can facilitate interdisciplinary planning and highlight key concepts that individual teachers can emphasize to reinforce students' prior experiences with the same concepts. At one school, the principal allocated time so that teachers could identify key themes that they taught. For example, one teacher taught the Civil War; another, the War on Poverty; still another, the Vietnam War. The key theme was the concept that all oppression brings resistance and conflict. By teaching this concept, students could make connections across classes and enhance understanding regarding the connectedness of knowledge. The discussion also increased the amount of future dialogue about curriculum among professionals at this school.

The development of school-produced curriculum documents that describe important student learnings is of paramount importance. To help guide teachers and enhance the conversation on curriculum, teachers should work with principals, curriculum specialists, or grade-level leaders to develop brief curriculum guides that may include key concepts and skills, essential questions, and assessment components. Pacing charts with general timelines to meet unit or thematic goals can also be helpful. Furthermore, the guides should include a list of instructional resources, textbooks, and enrichment material available for each subject. These documents should be brief, maybe three to five pages. Otherwise, there is little chance that they will be read. The written curriculum should be a living document frequently reviewed and discussed by teachers. What good is a curriculum that remains in a desk drawer gathering dust? By having teachers involved in refining the state-, district-, or school-developed curriculum to meet the needs of particular students, the principal can help to facilitate and maintain a dialogue on curriculum and teaching.

How Much Should Curriculum Change?

Before addressing the issue of curriculum change, it is important to consider a school's overall belief on whether curriculum is dynamic or unchanging. Without getting into a major discussion of various curriculum philosophies, let us remember that a classical education is very different from Dewey's notion of curriculum as process and experimentation in a democratic society—adjusting to changing world needs. The classical ideal maintains that there are essential skills and classical works that are enduring regardless of how the world changes.

However, if one accepts the notion that curriculum is dynamic, then there is always something new to add to the curriculum. Changing societal needs, technological innovations, and political realities all mean curricular changes. For those who accept the changing curriculum, the crucial questions are What do we need to do to prepare students for the future? What should be added to the curriculum? and What should be removed from the curriculum?

It is not easy to differentiate the latest fad from a meaningful curriculum innovation. What new curriculum ideas should be adopted? Which traditional ideas should be discarded or revived? Again, staff dialogue is a key. How can the school principal help the staff to determine what ideas are worth examining? Encouraging teachers to read professional journals, using time during faculty meetings to discuss innovations, sponsoring brown bag or study groups, and encouraging professional growth experiences beyond the school (e.g., conferences, workshops, and courses) are all ways that principals can help the staff examine the changes that are taking place. Ideally, the principal should look to the teachers to take the lead regarding an innovation. When necessary, principals can productively contribute to innovative projects by sharing research with the staff and revisiting the school vision and mission. Principals can then provide the support to encourage an innovative or pilot program in a class, grade level, or throughout the school.

States, school districts, or individual schools with institutionalized curriculum review cycles (usually 5-7 years) go a long way in making sure that systematic decisions are made when innovations come down the pike. (Schools should try to have representation on the district committees to assure that curriculum decisions are relevant to site-based needs.) The review cycle, which provides for an examination of different subject areas in a systematic way each year, can bring productive change, thoughtful decision making, and exciting curriculum discussions to a district office or school. Furthermore, the process "puts the skids" on those who try to pressure a change without a comprehensive review. The most refreshing aspect of a review cycle may very well be that the process institutionalizes change by building change into the structure of the organization. The very nature of the cycle encourages renewal because teachers examine the recent research in the curriculum area and other curricular and innovative instructional methods. This is essential in keeping an organization on the cutting edge.

An excellent project for a school to stay abreast of curricular innovations is to collect articles on various curricular or teaching trends and conduct a jigsaw activity at a faculty meeting to discuss the ideas. Various topics might include

- Motivating the at-risk student
- Whole-language instruction
- Outcome-based education
- Alternative assessment
- Integrated curriculum
- Pros and cons of national standards
- NCTM standards
- Multicultural education
- Using technology
- Coalition of Essential Schools movement

A variation of this activity might be to revisit the ideas of curriculum innovators such as John Dewey or Robert Hutchins or possibly discuss the ideas of more current theorists such as Howard Gardner or Elliot Eisner. This activity might encourage staff members to review what these educators propose and reflect as to whether the ideas are right for the school.

To pilot a curricular idea, a school might decide to tackle a topic, such as integrated curriculum, as an innovative project. For example, an integrated environmental education activity could result from this curriculum project. Students could write poems about the environment, run scientific experiments on the environment, use rainfall percentages in math, and discuss the social implications of our changing environment. These activities could culminate in a schoolwide Earth Day activity.

What Can We Learn From the Differences Between the Elementary and High School Curriculum Expectations That Can Help Us Develop Effective Interdisciplinary Practices?

The above question relating to the interdisciplinary curriculum can help to shed light on how we can do a better job teaching across disciplines.

A high school principal, observing an elementary school classroom, is immediately struck by the variety of subjects that elementary teachers are expected to teach within their classes. High school, obviously, is a considerable challenge because of the number of courses one teaches in a major discipline and the depth of knowledge one is expected to master for each course. On the other hand, the elementary school teacher, and often the middle school teacher, must maintain broad knowledge in a variety of disciplines. An elementary school teacher cannot be an expert in every discipline; the principal must accept this reality yet work with the teacher to ensure that each core subject is addressed competently in the elementary classroom. The various expectations of high school, middle school, and elementary school teachers can be discussed at grade-level meetings, during conferences with teachers from different schools, on inservice days, or as a focus of peer-coaching activities. Some schools regularly schedule vertical articulation days.

It is important to note that the traditional high school master schedule dictates how subjects are taught and the time frame of a class period. Until we take a hard look at the schedule, and exchange and pilot ideas—as many schools are now doing—it is difficult to try interdisciplinary strategies. Interdisciplinary strategies rely heavily on planning time as well as class time.

Interestingly, elementary teachers may have a clear advantage in making curriculum connections because one teacher is assigned to instruct students in a variety of core subjects. Thus elementary school teachers can capitalize on the common subject area concepts and the interests of students across the curriculum. This can be a powerful motivator and, of course, sets the stage for understanding that the various disciplines should be integrated, not fragmented. We must recognize relationships and connections among the academic disciplines. Focusing on key interdisciplinary concepts is one way of doing this. If one teacher teaches about the circulatory system and another the solar system, the key concept is that of "system." If the concept of what a system is, is taught well, then other teachers can capitalize on adding to this existing student understanding. Elementary school principals have a unique opportunity to promote this important educational principle with the teaching staff. They also need to allocate time for planning across classrooms and grade levels and for teachers to share their interdisciplinary approaches.

A major challenge for high school principals is working with the staff to develop more integration among the various disciplines. Approaches can range from paralleling a couple of courses, to teaching common themes when possible, to complete integration of two or more courses through team teaching and the synthesis of a variety of subject areas. In addition, providing a forum for secondary teachers to discuss what they teach and when they teach it can enable them to reinforce one another's subject area themes. For instance, in one high school, teachers in history and English were teaching World War II topics. By discussing the curriculum and how and when it was being delivered, they were able to emphasize and parallel key themes across their two classes for students. In another high school, dialogue led to the discovery that the English teacher was teaching *The Diary of Anne Frank* in November, whereas the history teacher addressed the Holocaust in March. By coordinating the time frames in which these were taught, the student experience was enhanced. At another school, staff members selected the theme of the Baroque period and used this as a backdrop for their particular areas of specialty.

Continuing the Curriculum Discussion

A principal's most important responsibilities regarding curriculum may be in providing the forum or setting to facilitate teacher curriculum discussions and ensuring that teachers have ownership of a written curriculum that is a living and working document. In this way, the curriculum of today can be kept dynamic and can excite teachers. Most important, it will prepare students for an ever-changing world. As one teacher summarized, "We should be aiming to help children become caring adults, builders of communities, sharers of learning, lovers of the printed word, citizens of the world, and nurturers of nature" (Teeter, 1995).

Principals may also want to obtain two important documents to add to their repertoire of curriculum resources: *Learning a Living: A SCANS Report for America 2000,* for the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, U.S. Department of Labor (April 1992) and *Prisoners of Time,* a report from the National Education Commission on Time and Learning (April 1994).

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. Do you agree or disagree with the definition of curriculum provided in this chapter? Discuss your ideas with a colleague.
2. What are the most important curriculum issues that currently need to be addressed in your school? Why are these issues important? How can you begin energizing the staff to address these issues?
3. Speculate on some of our societal trends that could affect the curriculum. Are schools addressing the curricular areas necessary to cope with the trends?
4. Should the curriculum reflect present societal trends or ideal societal possibilities?
5. What steps would you include in directing a curriculum review cycle?
6. How might staff interest in curriculum review, development, or implementation be enhanced?
7. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

13

Fueling the Learning Organization Through Staff Development

It takes a whole village to educate one child.

AFRICAN PROVERB

Why Staff Development?

Educating a child begins with a village of elders who themselves model and find their lives enriched by the quest for lifelong learning. Students learn as a result of what they see modeled within the school. Building-based staff development and other professional growth activities are, by design, opportunities for members of the school community to grow professionally in ways that will ultimately benefit both teacher and student. In the process, the entire system improves because of its increased capacity to influence productivity.

Staff Development Defined

Staff development consists of any activity that directly affects the attitudes, knowledge levels, skills, and practices of individuals that will assist them in performing their roles—present or future. Ideally, such development will not only make the individual a visible learner and responsive teacher but it will ultimately affect the student as learner. Research and experience suggest that the principal plays a vital role in collaborating with staff members to create and maintain a climate friendly to staff development and in ensuring that staff development activities address specific needs and that activities are assessed for impact.

Creating attitudes among the staff of "good but growing" is a critical first step. This is important because some staff members feel that when they are invited to attend training, there is an implicit message that they "need it" because of an inadequacy related to their performance.

Creating an Atmosphere for Staff Development to Thrive: Some Guidelines

Creating an atmosphere for successful staff development involves attending to the following guidelines:

Provide opportunities to create a sense of purpose for professional development. This purpose should reflect the school's vision, organizational members' professional growth needs, and student needs, as evidenced by performance on outcomes valued by staff members. For example, the staff can share professional growth goals and discuss student performance in relation to desired levels of achievement. Then, relevant staff development activities can be identified to address these need areas.

Encourage and support collaboration and mutual respect among all in the school community. This can be a critical source of support and will contribute to the implementation and institutionalization of staff development practices. Keeping all individuals informed, inviting people to participate in support group activities following training, and recognizing and celebrating collaborative efforts are essential events.

Focus on continuous improvement in quality. When precision training is developed that matches both staff and student growth needs, both individual and organizational performance is enhanced. Time should be taken to discuss and analyze needs according to responsibilities associated with roles. Student performance and desired skills should be examined. Training should specifically address the needs identified in this process.

Conduct readiness-building activities and plan collaboratively prior to training and implementation. Include maintenance activities to assure institutionalization of staff development. Wood, Thompson, and

TABLE 13.1 Planning Guide for Staff Development

1.	Readiness	Awareness, identification of broad goals, gaining commitment to innovation
2.	Planning	Goals translated into comprehensive, detailed plans; planning team representative of staff
3.	Training	Plans are translated into practice; effective staff development procedures followed
4.	Implementation	Support provided for posttraining activities, adaptation, and assessment
5.	Maintenance	Continuous monitoring, reassessment, and adaptation of innovation

SOURCE: Wood, Thompson, and Russell (1981).

Russell (1981) suggest five stages for a staff development program (see Table 13.1).

When training is designed, attention should be paid to five key components (Joyce & Showers, 1981):

1. Presentation of material
2. Demonstration of skills
3. Practice
4. Feedback
5. Coaching in the correct use of the new skill

There should be a focus on providing frequent opportunities for staff members to revisit staff development content, share successes, problem solve, and refine skills. This ensures opportunities for staff members to adapt new behaviors and learnings to their own situations. It also assures that training can be designed to address teacher concerns (mentioned in chapter 7) that initially focus on how the staff development will affect them personally; then, how they will manage a new program's implementation; and later, it may develop into how the programs will affect students (Hall & Loucks, 1978).

Design training for a variety of skill levels. Choose the appropriate one given staff needs. Training may be delivered to provide awareness, knowledge, skill development or application opportunities, or to foster internalization of concepts. Also, training should be spaced over time to promote the integration of new ideas, approaches, and behaviors into the classroom or workplace.

Training activities need to reflect and model those attributes of good teaching that we want to promote in classrooms: active learning, a brain-compatible approach, time for reflection, and tasks that respond to multiple intelligences. To illustrate:

1. Active learning opportunities can include cooperative learning tasks, small-group work, role playing, simulation, direct instruction, reciprocal teaching, videotape analysis, discussion, and microteaching. Emphasis should be on teaching that engages the whole class. For example, questioning strategies should be modeled to increase participants' awareness of the power of questions to engage the entire class and give all students the opportunity to respond to a variety of thinking and skill levels. These would include the skills of convergent and divergent thinking and the use of wait time to enhance the quality of student responses.
2. The brain-compatible approach recognizes the need for active involvement of the learner with the learning task and with fellow participants. It also highlights the need for participants to rehearse new learnings. It underscores the importance of not teaching too much too fast. Finally, it acknowledges the need to develop schemata or frameworks into which new information or knowledge fits.
3. Time for reflection allows the mind time for rehearsal and analysis. Insights can be gleaned as a result of providing time for thinking. Reflections may be recorded in logs or journals. They may be shared or remain confidential.
4. Multiple intelligence theory (H. Gardner, 1985) suggests there are at least seven "ways of knowing." These include verbal-linguistic, mathematical-logical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Designing staff development tasks with these in mind lends credence to the importance of highlighting the multiple ways we perceive and respond to the world.

Effective staff development programs use what is known about adult learning. Adults are more likely to be motivated when there is a relationship between staff development and their on-the-job responsibilities. Adults come to any learning experience with a rich background that begs to be tapped. Also, adult learning is ego involved. Learning a new skill may promote a positive or negative view of self. There is always a fear of external judgments that we adults are less than adequate, which produces anxiety during new learning situations.

Adult learners need to see the results of their efforts and have accurate feedback about progress toward their goals.

Staff development programs should be voluntary. Respecting staff members as professionals and treating them accordingly means providing each individual with the right to set meaningful professional development goals and allowing them the freedom to choose how they will meet those goals. Expect that not all staff members will embrace wholeheartedly the notion of staff development. Often, however, when key individuals seek such experiences, peer examples and peer pressure are more powerful influences than mandates. Influence, pressure, and support will play important roles in generating participation among those staff members who do not "jump on board" immediately.

When training is a "required opportunity" associated with implementing a new program or using new materials or equipment, provide the staff with choices regarding when training might be scheduled, the format, or the time frame. When staff development is designed for new staff members or beginning teachers, it is helpful to consult staff members who joined the previous year. They can lend valuable suggestions regarding their first-year needs that will contribute to planning responsive staff development.

Involve the staff in planning for staff development. One way to increase participation or "buy in" to staff development is to create a forum where teachers, support staff, administration, and classified staff can talk about the tasks associated with their roles and define areas that training would enhance. In addition, desired student outcomes could be examined in relation to current levels of performance. Training topics and approaches might then be identified that would provide all staff members with the knowledge, skills, and strategies to support students in reaching their potential.

Provide opportunities for the staff to learn about classical pedagogical knowledge and "current practice." It is important to provide staff members with information about current trends and developments in education such as the standards movement, process writing, interdisciplinary curriculum approaches, and authentic assessment. Equipped with knowledge, understanding, application opportunities, and the chance to analyze and evaluate how these developments affect or fit with one's work, the practitioner then has the background to distinguish between fleeting fads and sound practice when confronted with staff development choices.

When staff development occurs away from the school site, encourage school teams to attend. This provides a building-based system of support when colleagues return from training sessions and begin to implement new practices.

Demonstrate administrative support for staff development. Strategies include attending training with the staff, using the techniques or approaches, and allocating time for planning and implementing new learnings. Discussion time should be allocated to provide opportunities to problem solve and share examples of practice.

Use staff development as a public relations tool. With limited time, energy, and financial resources, using staff development as a public relations tool while it is being used to develop the individual and the organization provides the chance to get the most out of the investment. In some settings, the public relations venture might be an awareness session for parents about a new instructional, curricular, or assessment trend such as cooperative learning, whole-language instruction, or student portfolios. Providing information in this way also takes the mystery out of what the school is doing. In other schools, the public relations effort might be an invitation to businesses or key individuals from the community to attend training along with faculty members. One district typically shares training with the local college, university, and industry personnel, for example.

Avoid jargon. One way to diminish the possibility that staff development will become threatening is to eliminate the use of jargon and acronyms as substitutes for phrases or structures. A principal recently commented, "It's like alphabet soup around here . . . 'the SST will meet to develop IEPs in accordance with PL 94-142.' Why can't they just say, 'The student study team will meet to develop the individual educational plans for students in accordance with public law 94-142'?" Using language that a person on the street can understand helps to make the staff development activity "user friendly."

Build local school capacity. Once a staff has received training in a specific area and has applied it in classrooms, that often represents the end of the particular staff development effort. One way to continue the development of individuals while creating a local resource is to provide opportunities for staff members to participate in training for trainers. This fosters the development of presentation skills and helps a school build site-level support. Ultimately, this enhances the prospects that staff development activities will become institutionalized.

Assess the context in which staff development is to occur:

- How much is already going on?
- With what will the intended staff development activity compete?
- What will be the financial and emotional cost associated with the effort?
- How many cohorts of people will it affect (students, teachers, administrators, parents, substitutes)?
- How complex will the implementation be?
- Does the venture have relevance for the staff?
- Has the staff been involved in the decision to consider the staff development activity?

The following example demonstrates how these guidelines can be combined to plan a school-level program.

Planning a Peer-Coaching Program

To implement a peer-coaching program or any other staff development program, the context must be assessed and the approach matched to key variables in this assessment. The following guidelines will help you create awareness, develop readiness, build commitment, plan, and implement a peer-coaching program in your school (Robbins, 1991b).

1. Set up a planning group to learn about peer coaching, assess your school environment and support for coaching, develop a program plan, and organize activities.
2. Assess the school environment to identify the factors working for and against a successful peer-coaching program.
3. Provide information about peer coaching, including the rationale, what peer coaching is and is not, the various forms that coaching can take, and so on.
4. Provide opportunities for teachers to raise questions and concerns and get answers to them.
5. Solicit input from teachers on what they want the peer-coaching program to be like.
6. Analyze the types and levels of support and resources available.
7. Examine other demands on teachers' time and energy.
8. Develop a plan for and provide training in peer coaching for teachers who volunteer to participate.
9. Examine the issue of time (for training, practice, follow-up, and networking).
10. Develop a plan for and provide follow-up with frequent review and refinement sessions.
11. Develop a plan for bringing new teachers into the program.
12. Go slowly.

Facilitating the Individual's Staff Development Experience

In working with thousands of individuals over several years, the authors have noted that participants welcome specific aspects of staff development experiences. Principals need to keep these tips in mind when facilitating staff development opportunities:

Choose trainers who "do their homework" in order to learn about participants with whom they will be working and federal, state, and local mandates affecting the training and the trainees. This information can then be used during a session to increase its relevance for participants.

Begin with time for participants to share their expectations about what they hope to get out of the session. Eliciting expectations enhances the consultant's ability to tailor examples, comments, and activities to participant needs. In this way, as adults, participants feel they have control, or at least influence, over what happens to them during a session.

Focus on ways to build meaning into a session. Stories followed by time for discussion of personal experiences and time to reflect contribute to meaning. When a session has personal meaning for participants, they are more likely to buy into activities.

Invite participants to take responsibility for the pace of the workshop by providing "working" and "ready" cards. As a table group works together on a task, the working card is displayed. When the task is completed, the ready card is put up. This allows the consultant to pace the session according to participant needs. It also conveys the message that the workshop's success depends on both participant involvement and trainer planning and delivery.

Use participant's names. This makes individuals feel as if the consultant cares enough to personalize their experiences. Moreover, it indicates that the consultant has taken a personal interest in each individual from the first moment of contact. It shows, also, that every moment of the relationship is important and should not be taken for granted.

Provide participants with handouts that are hard copies of transparencies. This allows them to focus on what is being said, rather than focus on copying what is on the overhead. Because the mind can only pay conscious attention to one thing at a time, this enhances the participants' experiences.

Provide Post-it™ notes. Many participants do not want to write on their handouts. Providing Post-it™ notes so that comments can be written on the Post-its™ and then placed on the handouts takes care of this problem. Some participants even use the Post-it™ notes to mark sections in their handout packets or make notes about which pages they wish to use immediately.

Deliver training content in a user-friendly way. Participants welcome overviews, agendas, and outcomes for a session. Instruction should reflect a healthy balance of research and practice. Frequent opportunities for movement should be provided, such as the "Talk-walk," mentioned in the next chapter on faculty meetings. There should be a variety of tasks that address the needs of the auditory, visual, and tactile-kinesthetic learner in the session. Refreshments are always appreciated!

Search for and use humor. Cartoons, jokes, and sometimes "seizing the moment" add a special touch of warmth to a session. Consultants should be able to laugh at themselves. Humor often relaxes people. When the brain is in a more relaxed state, it is able to retain more.

Arrange furniture to reflect desired participant interactions. For example, consider positioning tables to facilitate participant discussion and table-group tasks, as well as access to the presenter's direct instruction. Invite participants to sit with a variety of people, but never insist. People should be invited to sit where they wish. Assigning seats takes control away from adults.

Establish norms regarding risk taking, participation, and accountability. Consultants should model risk taking and accountability, for example, by asking participants at the end of a session to review the expectations they generated, reflect on the session's content, and offer feedback. The trainer, in the beginning of the session, lets participants know that feedback will be solicited at the end of the session; hence the request for expectations is not an idle gesture. In this way, the person who conducts the workshop demonstrates a commitment to continual growth. The participants should be invited to set goals for themselves, take risks, participate as they feel comfortable, and assess their learnings. Many times participants are asked to brainstorm responses to "What have you learned?" and "What new questions do you have?" This data is used for program evaluation and future program planning. The adult participant recognizes, in this way, that input can influence a program. This contributes to a growing sense of efficacy.

The Big Picture

Principals who use the information within this chapter will increase the probability that the staff development program at a school will be responsive to both individual and organizational needs and will provide a variety of learning activities for the adults in the building who serve students. It is essential that the program be ongoing and provide for continuous improvement. Implicit in this orientation is the need to constantly assess how well the staff development program is meeting the goals for which it was ultimately intended: student and staff growth.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. Which of the guidelines for creating an atmosphere for positive staff development are most meaningful to you?
2. Create a plan for staff development with attention to the five stages (readiness, planning, training, implementation, and maintenance).
3. Review a staff development activity with which you have been involved. Evaluate it, using your learnings from this chapter.
4. What insights or questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

PART V

KEEPING THE PIPES FROM LEAKING: ADDING MEANING TO TRADITIONAL PRACTICE

14

Faculty Meetings

Faculty meetings: 30-minute opportunities or obstacles.

A PRINCIPAL'S VOICE

Faculty meetings present opportunities to talk about curriculum and instruction, increase our understanding of student development, strengthen staff cohesion, and build faculty morale. Although meetings have the potential to be used for this end, too often they are not. As a result, they are often perceived as a waste of time. A faculty member might be overheard saying after such a meeting, "We could have received the same information in a memo."

Faculty Meetings as Inservice Opportunities

Faculty meetings should always be viewed as an inservice opportunity. A principal should consider the meeting a success if teaching and learning were the central themes. Faculty members should walk out of these meetings feeling like they have actively participated in the meeting, had involvement in deciding the agenda, and most important, learned something. In a sense, these meetings represent a celebration, a gathering of teachers to reduce the isolation of the classroom, in which teachers share ideas about what works and what does not work.

Faculty meetings should not be used for "administrivia." Letting the staff know that you will not cover information during the meeting that could be mentioned in a memo can be comforting and helps build positive attitudes and perceptions about meetings. The trade-off is that teachers should read the memos. Many times, to encourage this, "gimmicks" have been built into the text of the memo. For example, a message might be written within the text regarding entering a drawing. The staff might need to estimate the number of reams of paper used by the school. Prizes might be gifts donated by local businesses. Keeping creature comforts in mind—location of the meeting, how much sitting is involved, and the availability of refreshments—enhances the affective appeal of the meeting.

At one school, staff members routinely ask themselves at the end of the meeting, "What have we done for students today?" Asking this question keeps the mission of the school in the forefront of everyone's eyes.

The suggestions that follow represent practices many principals have used successfully.

The School Mission and Faculty Meetings

The principal should view the meetings as an opportunity to emphasize the school mission. Certainly, in the beginning of the year and with new faculty, this is especially important. By coming back to the mission periodically, the message is going out that the mission is not just an idea that looks good in the handbook. Examples of classroom activities that are taking place to support the mission further reinforce the interrelationship between daily classroom activities, schoolwide goals, and the mission statement. Reviewing the mission statement and the corresponding goals periodically provides the staff with the opportunity to tailor the guiding principles and documents of the school to current needs.

The following activity represents a mission-building strategy. It can also be used to refine a mission statement. Individual staff members are asked to reflect on the following:

- Describe the place you would like to go to work each day.
- Describe the place you would like to send your children to school.

Staff members are then asked to fuse these visions into one. Following this, individuals are asked to share at table groups and to develop a composite vision. Table groups then share these composites and ultimately create one that represents the collective vision. When this is recorded, it can become the basis of a school mission. Many schools have included parents and students in the mission-building process.

An alternative activity can help teachers focus on a vision of the future. Principals can encourage teachers to think about the world students will face in the future. The activity would begin with the principal briefly reviewing four or five trends that futurists have predicted. These might include the movement toward the global village, the aging population, the increasing mosaic of America, more leisure time, the widening gap between rich and poor, the technology explosion, or single parenting. The staff would also be encouraged to suggest a couple of trends. A discussion would then take place focusing on the following questions:

- How do I personally feel about these trends?
- Are we teaching to address these trends?
- Should we be considering alternative teaching and curriculum strategies to address these trends?
- How are our nation's democratic principles affected by the trends?
- What are we doing on a schoolwide basis to address these trends?

The discussion can help to raise consciousness about the general outcomes of education as opposed to the microview of teaching objectives on which we so easily become focused during day-to-day classroom activities.

Increasing the Teachers' Roles in Faculty Meetings

As we work to foster greater teacher decision making in schools, faculty meetings become an important arena for teacher involvement. Teachers can collaborate in setting the agenda, co-plan the meetings, and present or facilitate (with or without the principal). Often, a teacher may desire to facilitate a meeting but would prefer to work with the principal or with another colleague. Presenting in front of the staff may not seem like a major occasion for a principal, but for a teacher who has not done so before, it can be both very stressful and rewarding. In many schools, the staff selects members to serve on a faculty advisory committee (FAC). The FAC works with the principal to develop the agenda and to plan, implement, and evaluate meeting effectiveness. The meeting agenda should be made public in advance, and requests for additional agenda items from staff should be solicited. On the meeting memo, space for additional written agenda items is provided. Meeting minutes can be recorded on butcher paper by faculty members so staff members can provide immediate feedback on the accuracy of the record of meeting proceedings. The recorder and facilitator roles can rotate on an ongoing basis. This level of involvement increases staff ownership and commitment to the school's activities.

Teachers and support staff may also play a major role in determining the focus of presentations during a given meeting. For example, the previously mentioned jigsaw activity (chapter 3) could be used to share articles on a controversial issue or innovative teaching strategy. At one school, when interest in a new wave of technology grew, the teachers set up a series of presentations by colleagues who were using technology successfully in their classrooms. Displays of student work and how the teachers implemented some of their ideas made for a successful meeting, helped build staff pride, and made teachers aware of resources just beyond the doors of their classrooms.

Time should be allocated for interested teachers for discussing specific teaching or assessment strategies, fine-tuning their questioning skills, or diagnosing math skills. Often, teachers can select video presentations, guest speakers, or written materials that can be part of the faculty meeting. At some schools, teachers host monthly faculty meetings in their classrooms.

Some Successful Faculty Meeting Strategies

Success Stories

The following activity has been successfully used during faculty meetings and takes from 20 to 30 minutes, depending on the size of the group. It is a good idea to do this activity across grade levels or subject areas. Generally, a note to faculty is sent out in advance, so that teachers and support staff can plan what they want to share.

Success Stories

> What works? Often we read about research studies that draw broad conclusions regarding how we should teach. These studies are very helpful. However, the studies frequently miss the day-to-day successes that teachers experience in our particular school.
>
> Please share with your colleagues a success story from your class that you have experienced recently. Why were you satisfied with this experience? Can the experience apply beyond the context of a particular student or class? If the success story involves instructional resources or student work, please bring these items to the meeting.

A variation on this activity is to bring a frustration or problem to a meeting. Asking colleagues how to deal with a difficulty can be extremely rewarding. However, the staff must be supportive and willing to take risks to implement this activity. If this activity is used, be sure not to end on a frustrating note. Here is where humor comes in handy! For example, at one meeting, the FAC playfully handed out chocolate to support teacher efforts to problem solve. On a more serious note, the support of individual classroom teachers was the critical element for problem solving.

Using Humor

Humor is a great tool for faculty meetings. In one school, a teacher approached a principal on the morning of a faculty meeting and mentioned that she would probably have to leave during the meeting for emergency root canal work. She was sorry that she would miss part of the meeting. To open the faculty meeting that day, the principal mentioned that one of the teachers had to decide which was worse, the faculty meeting or having to get root canal work. The teacher was such a masochist that she chose to accept a little of both! That opening got the meeting off to a good start. When necessary, such remarks also can come in handy at the end of a meeting. Often, an anecdote about a child can fit the occasion and emphasize an important theme. One teacher shared such a story by telling about a second-grade student who, while completing a math paper, counted on her fingers, recorded the answer, and then blew a kiss for every problem. When questioned about this technique, the child explained that her first-grade teacher told her "when you get to second grade and do math, you can just kiss your fingers good-bye!" The story added humor to the meeting and reminded all of the importance of meaning in our actions.

Spreading the Word About Effective In-School Practices

The principal can use faculty meetings to review some of the effective practices that are being implemented in the school. Citing specific examples of effective classroom practices spreads the word about instructional and curricular approaches that work and also serves as a source of recognition for those teachers whose practices have been noticed. If you are managing by wandering around, share highlights of your visits with an emphasis on effective practices at these meetings. This is an excellent way to remind teachers of the goals emphasized for the year or about the risk-taking behaviors being modeled by the staff. Let the staff know about positive comments made by parents about the school. Again, the meetings are a great opportunity to build staff morale and celebrate staff expertise.

Supporting Vertical Articulation and Interdisciplinary Curriculum and Instructional Practices

Faculty meetings are great opportunities to get elementary, middle, and high school teachers to meet across grade levels and across departments. Traditionally, the social studies, science, or foreign language departments meet separately, following a faculty meeting or on a different day. The principal can allocate time to facilitate departments meeting across disciplines to explore the possibilities for interdisciplinary curriculum work and to promote the sharing of effective teaching practices across disciplines and grade levels. Interestingly, when we discuss the interdisciplinary curriculum, we usually overlook the interdisciplinary instructional practices that should be considered. For example, if only one teacher is using cooperative learning, performance assessment, or reflective writing in a classroom, students may not see these practices as valuable throughout their other classes. The faculty meeting provides a special forum to foster the development of interdisciplinary planning for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Interdisciplinary department meetings also give the staff an opportunity to pursue consistent strategies and activities to meet the school mission.

In the elementary school, faculty meetings offer good opportunities to break up into small groups across grade levels or departments (e.g., English as a Second Language [ESL]) to promote the vertical articulation of the curriculum. For example, groups of second- and third-grade teachers meeting together can reflect on the following questions: What are you finding out about the students we sent to you last year? What are their strengths and weaknesses? Standardized test results can also be reviewed in this way. What are the student strengths and weaknesses based on the test results? How can we work together across grade levels and disciplines to meet our school or district goals?

The following faculty meeting guides have been used to pursue some of the goals mentioned previously while promoting articulation across grade levels.

Discussion Guide: Vertical Articulation of the Curriculum

Grade Levels ______________ (two or more)

The following are intended as questions to stimulate discussion across grade levels. Please add to these as you see fit.

1. When your students leave your grade, what do you expect them to know? To do? (key concepts, content, and skills)
2. What would you like the incoming students to know? To do? (key concepts, content, and skills)
3. What are the congruencies and discrepancies in your view regarding the expectations?
4. Conclusions?
5. Next steps we plan to take . . .

At certain times during the year, staff members have found it helpful to meet to discuss standardized test results. The following guide has been used as a conversation starter.

Analyzing Standardized Achievement Tests Results

Grade Level ______________

1. What patterns emerged as important for our grade level?

   Strengths:

   Weaknesses:

2. How can the results be helpful for the remainder of this year?

3. Do you have any recommendations for the previous grade level or the next grade level?

4. What are some of the major similarities and differences between the objectives of the standardized tests and our school curriculum?

5. What are some of the major goals of our curriculum that cannot be assessed through standardized tests? How should we assess these goals?

6. Conclusions?

7. Next steps?

The One-Legged or Standing Faculty Meeting for Short, Informative Sessions

Often when you have promised the staff that a short faculty meeting will take place to report on an immediate or emergency issue, the meeting tends to drag on. If you ask the staff to stand during the meeting, you are symbolically illustrating that you are serious about holding a brief meeting. The staff member who wants to hold up the group with his or her own agenda will be very reluctant to do so when everyone is standing and ready to go. Also, you can ask staff members to stand near the end of a regular meeting and promise them the meeting will end in 5 minutes. You will have to keep your promise! Furthermore, the staff will enjoy the opportunity to stretch!

Talkwalk for Energy, Exercise, and Dialogue

Teachers often come to meetings exhausted after a hard day's work. Imagine their surprise at an invitation to take a walk with one or two colleagues for 10-15 minutes! The Talkwalk (Caro & Robbins, 1991) engages the staff in professional dialogue while providing exercise, energy, a change of environment, and the opportunity to share expertise. Staff members tend to return from the walk in a more relaxed, reflective mood.

Encouraging Participation in Professional Growth Activities for Responsiveness and Meaning

The faculty meeting can also be used to share ideas about professional growth activities. Is there a new university program in the area? Is a well-known consultant presenting in the district or school within the next few weeks? Is grant money available for summer study? Are there professional growth experiences that teachers would like to see take place on site? Are teachers willing to share their professional growth experiences with other staff members? Do the ESL or Special Education departments desire to share strategies for the mainstreamed classrooms? The possibilities for professional development are endless. These possibilities can be highlighted on a professional development bulletin board kept in a prominent place. By making this an issue during faculty meetings, the principal and the staff are taking an important symbolic stand in support of professional growth.

Video-Stimulated Discussions— For Fun, Reflection, and Dialogue

Many staffs have begun a practice of bringing in a popular video and playing a portion of it to stimulate discussion. Examples range from *Robin Hood*, to begin a discussion on developing a collaborative workplace, to *Rain Man*, as a beginning for conversations about inclusion. Staff members rotate responsibility for bringing in videos. A variation of this approach is to use stories (either adult literature or children's) as a springboard for conversation.

Swap Meets—for Clean Rooms and Effective Use of Resources

To build a positive climate and to facilitate sharing, some faculty meetings periodically include a "swap meet." Swap meets provide the opportunity for teachers to exchange instructional or curricular resources. To illustrate, for the swap meet, teachers bring items they no longer use to exchange for items that other teachers bring. Sometimes these meets are preceded by classified ads in which teachers identify needs for resources in a "want ad" format. Requests range from coupons to books, plastic jars to magazines, or simply ideas—either written, recorded, or videotaped.

A Final Thought

In closing, it is important to reiterate that the faculty meeting is an opportunity for professional growth and the celebration of teaching as professionals gather together to share and learn. We often hear that teaching is the second most private act. The faculty meeting is the perfect forum for teachers to interact and break down the traditional barriers that serve as obstacles to discussing what goes on in our classrooms.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. What is the level and type of staff involvement in your faculty meetings? Explain. What are some strategies to increase staff involvement?

2. Which idea from this chapter might you implement during the next faculty meeting?
3. What are some additional ideas that can be used to hold effective faculty meetings?
4. What are some new thoughts that have occurred to you as a result of this chapter?

15

First Days of School

A time to enjoy the fun of getting together after a long summer.

The first days of every school year are always both exciting and nervous times for students, parents, the newcomer to the principalship, veteran administrators, and teachers. Regardless of how many years one has spent in the profession, the new year is always a time of renewal and uncertainty. This is a time of renewal because it is a chance to try a fresh approach with new and returning students and teachers. It is a time of uncertainty because, whether one is a newcomer or a veteran, there are always questions: Will I succeed this year? What will be the new challenges? Often, principals try to speculate about what the challenges and issues will be for a new year. The best philosophy may be simply to say, "I don't know what the challenges or issues will be, but I'll try to be ready!"

The beginning of the year also has special significance because the brain remembers beginnings and endings. The first impression that a principal makes with the staff will be a lasting impression. Additionally, in the beginning of the year our senses are heightened, and the opportunity exists to face new and old challenges with a fresh perspective. On the other hand, too much change in the beginning of the year can be unnerving—especially if the changes come as a surprise to the staff. A blend of tradition and change may be the best approach if one has the chance to influence the beginning of the year.

Logistical Concerns

Distributing a schedule of preschool activities to teachers with a welcome-back letter a couple of weeks before school begins is a good way to let teachers know that all is moving along smoothly. The letter can help to encourage the staff to begin thinking about the new year and plan activities and actions that need to be taken care of before initial school meetings begin. In a year-round school, this will be necessary for each track. The letter also models a value for preparedness.

During the first days of the new school year, the principal needs to be very concerned about logistics. This is no time to emphasize how much he or she knows about instructional leadership. For example, the principal must make sure

- The pipes are not leaking
- The restrooms have necessary supplies and are in working order
- There is chalk in the classrooms
- The schedule works
- The bus schedule is posted
- The furniture has been moved to accommodate enrollment data and teacher needs
- The lights are working (check fluorescent bulbs)
- The class lists are right

One principal thought he was ready on the first day, except for one problem: The automated school bells had not been calibrated for the year, the custodian had forgotten about the bells, and the principal did not know how to set them. The principal quickly learned. What a way to start! Although operating the school bells should never be confused with educational leadership, the ability to calibrate bells in this case contributed to things running smoothly.

Before classes begin, teachers want to make sure they have resources and time to work in their classrooms. Scheduling a workshop in lieu of providing time to set up classrooms could be a "kiss of death" to the feeling tone in the school. There should be a balance in how the preschool time is organized with a sensitivity to teacher and classroom needs. Regarding instructional resources, each teacher should receive, without asking, essential classroom supplies and instructional resources. These items might include

Chalk
Erasers
Markers
Paper
Pens
Pencils
Attendance record sheets
AV request slips

Tape
Bulletin board materials
Curriculum guides
Globes
Necessary teacher editions
A list of recent library acquisitions
Grade books
Planning books
Garbage cans

Having these items in classrooms when teachers arrive tells them that you care. If you have not used this procedure, develop a "beginning of the year supply list" with three or four veteran teachers and the secretary. Also, check with the library, media center, and computer resource areas to make sure they have necessary resources and are ready for the first day of school. Teachers welcome lists of new library and media acquisitions.

Another logistical concern should be school maintenance. The principal should review the summer maintenance requests with the custodian and walk through the school several days before the year begins to make sure that the repairs have been completed and that the school is clean and safe. In elementary schools, the playground areas should be carefully checked for hazards. In the middle and high schools, checking locker conditions and common gathering areas is a must.

To remain on top of logistical concerns from year to year, keep a "beginning of the year" folder as part of your "tickler file" (see chapter 16, section on tickler file). Although the monthly tickler file will include important activities covered during each month, the beginning-of-the-year file is especially important to help you begin successfully. Remember to update the file a few days after the school year starts. Soliciting staff input can be helpful in enhancing beginning-of-the-year activities. The file is especially valuable to a principal who will be taking over a new school. Typical items that may be in the file include letters to parents, previous year's teaching schedules, programs from various school productions, minutes or agendas of faculty meetings, or reflections on how to improve Back to School Night.

Beginning-of-the-Year Faculty Meetings Set a Tone

Faculty meetings are extremely important in the beginning of the year as colleagues, old and new, gather together, work collaboratively, and, it is hoped, grow professionally. These meetings present special opportunities for principals to strengthen staff cohesion and morale.

Your first obligation during the meetings should be to remind staff members that you are there to serve them.

Consider a specific theme to set the tone for the year. For instance, if the theme is "The School as a Community of Learners," activities need to be structured to reflect that. One such activity is to remind teachers of the wealth of knowledge that exists among the staff. During a faculty meeting, teachers might be asked to add up their collective years of teaching at a table group and share. The table with the most number of years might be awarded a prize. Such activities remind one of the rich resources that exist just beyond one's classroom door. By seeking advice from colleagues, staff members are able to tap the wisdom of practice that exists in a school. Without doing so, one runs the risk of repeating an initial year of teaching several years in a row. Staff development should always be a significant part of faculty meetings. The beginning of the year is the perfect time to make this point. A principal should consider activities that help teachers think about the year and possibly create a vision of the kind of year they can have with their students and colleagues. Before beginning this visioning activity, review the school's philosophy or mission with the staff. Ask if they believe it needs revisiting or revising. Here is a variation on a "reverse visioning" activity used successfully in the beginning of the year from the book *If It Ain't Broke . . . Break It!* (Kriegel, 1991).

Reverse Visioning—A Variation

You are 85 years old . . .

1. What did you do with your life?
2. What were the significant milestones at 30, 40, . . . 80?
3. What qualities did you exhibit?
4. How do other people describe your life?
5. Do you have any regrets? If so, what are they?
6. What would you have done differently?
7. As you are sitting in your rocking chair, a former student comes to visit you on your 85th birthday. The student states that he or she remembers you very well. Ideally, what would you hope that the student would say about you?

Pair up with a new teacher or someone who is not on your grade level or specialist area and discuss your ideas.

After the exercise, teachers were asked to write on a small poster what they wanted the students to say about them. Teachers were given markers and poster paper to complete the activity.

These faculty meetings should be used also as a link with previous years. Review the school's traditions, successes, and what characterizes the culture of the school. This is not a time to review every topic in the faculty handbook. Certainly, new or very significant school changes should be mentioned, but teachers should read the handbooks on their own. This is the time, however, to remind staff members of the noble purpose of their profession and the years of dedication to students. Remember, what you pay attention to communicates what you value.

If yearly goals are developed, then a review of last year's recommendations and the refinement of that document needs to begin (see Chapter 8, "Building a Vision and a Mission Together"). These goals are important for teachers and students. The common goals can send a signal to students while they are in a class that the teachers are working together. For example, if fostering diverse student answers to questions is a school goal, emphasizing the goal in each discipline can be especially powerful in high schools as students move from class to class and realize that teachers are encouraging the same behaviors. This lets students know that teachers are communicating and working together.

Fun activities should also be part of a school's opening. For example, the following activity helped the staff in one school become better acquainted and proved to be a pleasant icebreaker:

1. Teachers were divided into groups of four.
2. Each group member listed four statements about himself or herself—one statement was false.
3. Each person then read his or her list, and the other group members guessed which statement was false.
4. After all guessed, each person revealed which of the statements was false.
5. Points were awarded for accurate guessing and for "stumping" the group.

Another staff had a back-to-school breakfast. Following the meal, a scavenger hunt was scheduled so staff members could find additional resources. The winning team received gift certificates to a local teacher supply store.

Departmental and Grade-Level Meetings

These meetings should be prescheduled because the time for small groups to get together to plan the year is critical. Grade-level and departmental meetings should be held for reviewing and refining the curriculum and estimating time lines for completing work. This should include a review of the successes as well as hurdles of the previous year. The emphasis should not be to cover everything but to discuss key outcomes that should be stressed for the year. Also, this time should be used to review some of the major activities that are held during the year (e.g., Thanksgiving program, Spirit weeks, Martin Luther King commemoration, Earth Day activities) to adjust time accordingly. Ensuring that all members of the grade-level and department teams have sufficient supplies should also be a goal of these meetings. Veteran teachers should help newcomers review instructional resources and share their materials at this time.

Reviewing the vertical articulation of the curriculum should also be an objective of these meetings (see chapter 14, "Faculty Meetings"). Sequential grades should meet (e.g., Grades 3 and 4) to review the expectations for the present and following year. Too often, we forget to consider the next year and micromanage the curriculum for the next day. To facilitate a more far-reaching view of the curriculum, the third-grade teachers, for example, should ask the fourth-grade teachers, What do you expect fourth graders to be able to do when the year begins? This helps the staff to project for the next year, not the next day, and can have important implications for how one teaches. In middle and high schools, departmental members should be asking the same questions of one another to project for the future. Ideally, the teachers in exit grades in each school should talk about their expectations to all of the teachers in grades below them, as well as to receiving teachers in the grades above them.

Discussing interdisciplinary curriculum and instructional strategies should, in addition, be considered at this time. Setting time aside early in the year can set the stage for various departments to meet together to discuss the possibilities of a parallel curriculum (e.g., teaching related topics at similar times) or actual interdisciplinary teaching (e.g., teaching common themes and concepts, working on projects and activities together, as well as team teaching). In elementary settings, grade-level meetings can also be devoted to these possibilities.

Orienting Teachers New to the School

Separate orientation sessions for new teachers and teachers new to the school should be set up. Usually 1 or 2 days before veteran school staff members return is sufficient time to hold the meetings. Whether a teacher is new to the profession or simply new to the school, this is an anxious time. A veteran teacher who may have been very successful in previous schools can find this time especially taxing as he or she will be experiencing some of the same frustrations as the total newcomer: Exactly how does that copier work? What are the rules for duplicating material? What is the schedule? Where are resources housed?

As with the general faculty meetings, the principal should view this time as an opportunity to set an example with the new staff by not only responding to their immediate needs but also emphasizing the school mission and the possibilities that exist for students when teachers are committed, have energy and enthusiasm, and care about kids. The principal should talk about the school culture and celebrate teaching. Also, the principal can use this time to stress that the school is a learning community and that the principal too is learning along with the teachers.

Devote very little time during the meetings to the faculty handbook—emphasize only those procedures that are essential. Send the message that you know the teachers are professionals and can read the manual on their own. Welcome questions about the handbook for the next meeting. As they will be anxious about curriculum material, make sure the material is available on the first meeting day with curriculum guides and teacher editions. A tour of the school and available instructional resources (both basic and enrichment) should also be a priority.

For the beginning teacher,

- Stress the importance of structuring the classroom early in the year.

- Suggest resources to create a positive class climate.
- Provide a variety of models for room arrangement.
- Encourage teachers to review basic school and classroom routines with their classes during the first few days of school. (This should help to save time and reduce possible student problems as the year progresses.)
- Offer time for them to check out resource materials.
- Provide a question-answer session.
- Schedule follow-up meetings 1 or 2 weeks into the new year to provide a forum for sharing and problem solving.

Asking a second-year teacher about the needs and questions he or she experienced during the first year of service can be useful in determining elements of an orientation session.

Instituting a buddy system for new teachers is a wonderful way to ease their transition into the school. Encouraging the veteran staff to show newcomers around and take them out to dinner or breakfast, at the school's expense, can go a long way in helping newcomers feel part of the group. By simply answering the various questions that newcomers have—and are reluctant to ask the principal—the buddies can give teachers a sense of security and help them get off to a successful start.

Teacher Time in the Classroom

Besides receiving their instructional supplies, teachers want to spend time in their classrooms. Teachers should have ample opportunity to do so. If you have several days scheduled of preschool meetings with teachers (this varies from school to school), try to make a symbolic statement by having one day or the greater part of a day without any meetings to show staff members that you respect their need to get into the classroom. Certainly, classroom time should be built in to every day before school. Moreover, many teachers will want to work in their classrooms the weekend before school opens. Make it easy for them. If building security is a problem, facilitate the process to keep classrooms open so teachers know you are serving them; the bureaucracy should not become an obstacle during this critical period.

Welcoming Students and Parents

If possible, hold an open house for new students and their parents the Friday afternoon before school opens. For middle and high schools, ask selected veteran students of the school to come to the open house to give the newcomers a tour of the school. This is a good time to introduce assistant principals, counselors, secretaries, support staff, and custodians to the students and parents. This should be a light function, a social gathering, with refreshments. It should be scheduled for about an hour. The gathering can include ice cream for elementary students. A few students from the upper elementary school, middle school, or high school, depending on the setting, can serve as guides.

Ask the parent association to assist on the first day, orienting new parents, serving coffee, and so on. Encourage the association to have a welcome table for parents. Try to have parent volunteers to assist new families.

Be Out There on the First Days of School

Finally, on the first day of school, plan on being visible to teachers, students, and parents throughout the day. One principal wears a funny hat on the first day so people will gravitate toward him with any logistical questions. Again, the time needs to be built into your schedule well in advance. Circulate on the campus, in the hallways, and in the cafeteria. Also, try to visit as many classes as possible during the first couple of days to personally welcome students and wish them a successful year. Some principals have classes visit their office to emphasize school rules, review activities, answer questions, and generally get acquainted. Often, assemblies are held on the first day to go over school rules. If possible, consider holding the assemblies on the second day, so teachers and students can start smoothly and begin their classroom routines. Most important, by being out there (e.g., in the cafeteria and corridor, on the field, by the buses) on the first days of school, the principal reaffirms that important events in the school happen in the classroom and on the campus and not in the administrative offices. In doing this, the principal can proactively troubleshoot logistical problems in order to see that the school gets off to a smooth start.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. Make a list of 5-10 priorities that a principal should act on before the school year begins.
2. Develop a 2-day orientation schedule for faculty.
3. Create an agenda for the first faculty meeting. Consider collaborating with staff members to plan it.
4. Share one or two fun activities that could be included during the faculty orientation period.
5. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

16

Tips: Ideas That Work and Align With the School's Mission

Let's not reinvent the wheel.

We are often advised to work smarter, not harder. This chapter will help you follow this advice. There are many suggestions that we have made throughout the book that are really "tricks of the trade," so we are bringing some of these ideas together in this chapter for you as a "quick read." We will add, also, new ideas (e.g., key questions to ask when interviewing prospective teachers) that can help you to enhance your performance. In addition to the tricks of the trade, we will include simple suggestions that can firm up the values that are important to your school. Each idea has gone through a kind of litmus test; that is, the idea is included because it has been used successfully and can add positively to the effectiveness of a principal and the culture of the school—ideas are not included because they are simply "cute."

Organizing Your Time

Using a tickler file. Probably one of the best organizing tools a principal can use is a tickler file that includes all of the important events, activities, and deadlines for each month (you "tickle" it monthly). Thus, when November is about to roll around, the principal and secretary meet, review a list prepared by the secretary of items in the November file, and examine each previous November memo or important activity description. It is helpful to have separate "beginning" and "end of the year" files in addition to the August/September and May/June files. A very helpful addition to the file is a monthly section that includes your reflections on the events so errors are not repeated, successes are noted, and ideas for next year can be immediately added to the file. A tickler file is invaluable to a principal new to a school.

Tracking major projects—prioritizing. In addition to the tickler file, it is very helpful to have a card-monitoring system with your notes on the cards concerning major projects or key personnel. The system enables you to quickly review and reflect on your priorities to always "keep the big picture in view." The cards are usually in a two- to four-page folder with viewing pockets for each card. These card systems are often advertised in business or commercial airplane magazines. A system that holds about four pages is pretty ideal. It is great because one can write down important ideas at any time. For example, a principal may have cards for next month's faculty meeting, the next parent bulletin, a specific school goal, the present science review, the holiday show, the professional growth workshop, key personnel, student concerns, and a daily "to do" card. The cards are reviewed and moved, sometimes weekly, at other times daily, depending on your priorities. Projecting toward the future, cards may include the names of possible teaching candidates, thoughts on scheduling, and goal suggestions for the next school year.

Blocking your personnel schedule. We know that if principals are not careful about monitoring their time—and often interruptions are unavoidable—they will have little control over their schedule. A very helpful tip is to block in time well in advance if you want to be in certain places and engage in particular activities, such as exercise! We are not only talking about scheduled assemblies or formal observations. Principals should also block in morning walkabouts to classrooms and short periods to greet or say good-bye to students during the day if these activities are important. Principals must ask themselves, "What message(s) do I need to send to the staff, students, and parents through my behavior?" "What are my priorities?" "Am I spending time on these priorities?" It is especially vital that the school secretaries know the principal's priorities as secretaries can have tremendous influence on the schedule.

Making Record Keeping Easier

Pocket planner. Recordkeeping is a difficult job, given the fragmentation and variety that characterize the principal's role. To help keep things together, a pocket planner can be used. A pocket planner is a 3" × 5" index card that one carries in the pocket. It can be used to keep track of things accomplished that address goals or supervision data. For goals, for instance, one writes the goal at the top of the card:

Goal: To implement reading, writing, and thinking across the curriculum

Accomplishments:	**Date of Completion:**
Distributed article to staff	9-14-94
Faculty meeting discussion	9-27-94

Every time something is accomplished that addresses this goal, write it on the card. Then when reports are due, the data are all on the card. Similarly, the school vision can be written on a card, and indicators of that vision becoming reality can be noted and celebrated with the staff.

For supervision, write staff names down the left side of the card. Across the top write the months. Then every time a visit is made, jot down a note on your card:

Names	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.
Alvarez	9/13 walk through		
Bond			
Cathay	9/15 left a note		
Denny			
Elton			
Foster			
Gage	9/16 visit w/kids		
Hunt			

By keeping this record, you can make sure that your visits are distributed evenly among staff members. This can help, also, if you need documentation when working with a marginal teacher or other member of the staff. The walk-through technique, often called management by wandering around, can be used to learn how the first and last 10 minutes of classes are used and whether or not valued instructional and curricular approaches are being practiced. Many principals use this time to interview students to learn of their perceptions of classroom experiences.

Principals who use the pocket planner approach say that it is simple, convenient, efficient, and effective.

Additional Helpful Ideas to Stay On Task

Those memos and mail—touch once! A helpful management suggestion and first-rate time saver is to try to touch each item that comes across your desk only once (one major exception will be noted). How does this work? To begin with, make sure you have in and out boxes on your desk. Then get in the habit of thinking that there are only five possible actions that you can take with each in-box memo, and make a quick decision on each item. First, should someone else be dealing with this item? If yes, delegate and send it on to that person. Do not worry if you are not sure if it is his or her responsibility, you will surely get it back if it isn't! Second, does the memo require immediate action by you (often just a signature)? If yes, quickly write the appropriate comment for the colleague asking for the action. Third, is the memo something that does not require present action but may need to be referred to in the future? If yes, file the item for possible future reference. Fourth, does the item belong in the "circular" file? If yes, do not hesitate to throw it away, and keep a box next to your garbage can for nonconfidential items to be recycled. Fifth, does the memo require further review (e.g., reports, professional articles)? If yes, it will require a second touch. These items should be kept in a folder ("review") and reexamined when a block of time is available. Very few items should go into this folder.

Reflection log. Keep a log of your reflections. This provides an avenue for a "professional time out" and increases your capacity to be reflective and analytical. The art and practice of reflection allows one to view a situation from a different perspective, given the fact that time usually has elapsed between the occurrence of an event and when one makes the time to think about it. Often fresh insights emerge or one resolves to handle future, similar situations in a different way.

Using the computer. To begin with, do not assume that using a computer will save you time or paper. You may very well use more of both. But if you use the computer properly, you will likely be more creative and effective on the job. As software companies have become more familiar with schools, the programs for administrators on scheduling, attendance, student records (including discipline), and report cards have significantly improved. However, it is a school's responsibility to examine the packages carefully and encourage the software companies to work closely with schools to work out program glitches. It is important also to avoid a situation in which only one computer "guru" in the school knows how a system works. If that is the case, the software package is not suited for the school. Additionally, there are excellent, very simple software packages for sending out announcements, fliers to parents, compliments to students, and, in general, just helping principals to communicate better.

A cautionary note: Principals spend their time with people. Because the computer is a fascinating and powerful tool, one can easily spend a lot of time in his or her office working with the computer. Even fancy memos, produced on the computer, are no substitute for personal interaction.

The look book. An excellent way to communicate daily morning announcements is to use a look book for all teachers to quickly read. It works equally well in elementary, middle, or high schools. The book can be placed in strategic spots in large schools to help save paper and reduce loudspeaker interruptions in the school building. In the look book, the teachers view important information for that day. For example,

1. The report card comments were thoughtful, objective, and informative. Your hard work is much appreciated.
2. Assembly at 10:10 instead of 10:15 because we are recognizing 5 students for their environmental work.
3. Reading Committee meeting at 12:05.

4. Math Department meeting during 8th period.
5. Reminder: Student council representatives will be visiting 7th-grade classes to generate interest in the charity drive.
6. Today is Mr. Abram's birthday; we can't give his exact birth year because records were not kept in those days!

The book keeps everyone informed, enhances the idea of community, and when humor is added, can create a friendly and positive tone to begin the day. The principal should write in the look book before leaving on the previous afternoon. The look book has a couple of extra benefits: It serves as a detailed record of what took place each day at school, and it breaks down the isolation that sometimes occurs in schools by bringing everyone to a central area to read the daily comments. It really works!

Interviewing Teacher Candidates

One of our most important job responsibilities is to hire the best teaching candidates available. Remember, the candidate is also looking you over so it is important to ask thoughtful, insightful questions that get to the heart of the matter and reflect the values you wish to emphasize. The candidate may decide to select your school over others based on his or her feelings about the quality of the interview. Here are some helpful questions (this is not an exhaustive list) and ideas that might yield important information about teacher candidates.

- In your opinion, how do children learn best?
- What do you remember about your best teacher?
- What would a visitor to your classroom hear and see?
- If I were to speak to a friend who knows you well, what might the friend say?
- When not in school, what do you enjoy doing?
- What are your greatest professional strengths? or After reading your recommendations, I'm curious about what you think a supervisor would say about your teaching.
- If you could return to school or work with an expert mentor, what would you like to study? How would you like to grow?
- Why, in your opinion, do some children have an easier time learning than others?

- What are your beliefs about classroom management?
- How should the "high flyer" student be taught? The student having difficulty?
- How do you feel about professional development?
- What other career would you pursue if you were not teaching?
- If you could choose your No. 1 ideal position in our school, what would it be? What would your second choice be?
- What new ideas and teaching strategies do you think you can bring to this school?
- What excites you about education?
- Why should we hire you over other candidates?
- It's important that you don't leave this interview thinking, "I wish I had mentioned that!" So, is there anything that you would like to tell me or that I should know about that we have not already discussed?

A helpful addition to an interview may be to request that a classroom photo album be brought to the interview by the candidate. Looking at the faces of students or the walls of the classroom can tell us much about a candidate. Many systems also show a video lesson and ask a teacher to analyze it. A teacher portfolio (writing samples are especially helpful) or video of a lesson is invaluable. If the candidate is short listed, can you take the time to see the candidate teach? Multiple data sources provide for sound decisions.

Providing Experiences to Celebrate the Culture

The following activities, events, projects, strategies, or professional development recommendations have all been successfully implemented. A few of the ideas may be right for your school or, we hope, may spark an idea that will strengthen the values essential to your school.

"See them teach before they leave." When teachers are permanently leaving a school, especially the retiring veteran, ask the parting teachers if it would be okay for other teachers to watch them teach during the final month of the school year. Use the slogan "See them teach before they leave" (in the look book) for a couple of days to encourage

teacher visits. The principal should offer to cover some of the classes while staff members visit their parting colleagues. This type of project could become a catalyst for increasing classroom visits among teachers during the school year.

Worthwhile faculty meetings. Although chapter 14 covers faculty meetings, it is important to stress that the meetings should not be used for communicating information that could just as easily be conveyed in other ways. For example, teachers quite rightly feel cheated if they have to remain at a meeting in which a list is being read to them. Faculty meetings should be for staff development, such as providing tips for working with non-English speakers or students who have been placed in inclusion settings, sharing ideas from professional articles, discussing classroom successes and seeking collegial advice to deal with frustrations, learning about new teaching strategies, or working on departmental, grade-level, or schoolwide curriculum issues. If a school schedules regular faculty meetings and there is very little substance to cover for a particular meeting, it would be wise to cancel the meeting every once in a while so that teachers can use the time to complete important class work. One principal did this, referring to the action as giving the staff "the gift of time" for the afternoon.

Phoning the good news. How often do we call parents to give the good news? Unfortunately, our reflex goes like this: Billy has messed up again; is it time to call his parents? It is rarely: Johnny was very helpful with that new student, should I call his parents? We need to call home and send letters home when good news takes place. In some schools, students call from the principal's office to give the good news themselves. One particular principal even uses a cellular phone while walking around the school and calls parents about a positive observation with the child present. This has served to positively influence parental attitudes toward the school.

The principal as reader and teacher. Students love to have the principal visit class to read a story or a poem. The holiday season is a perfect time for this type of activity. The school librarian can be very helpful in selecting a variety of stories for each grade level to be read by the principal. About 15-20 minutes of time in each class works. Two or three classes a day for several weeks will do the trick. One principal who is a Vietnam veteran teaches when secondary students are working on this part of the curriculum. It is very important for students to see the principal in a role other than the traditional one—the disciplinarian or person "in the office."

Principal for a Day. A contest can be held in which individual students send the principal letters stating why they should be chosen from among their classmates to "take over for a day." The principal would become the student when the exchange takes place. To get several students involved, the position can change each hour or class period. Principals have also exchanged jobs with business leaders for a day as a community project.

The principal's scrapbook. School principals receive notes, pictures, art work, poems, photographs, and so on from students throughout the year. Posting these items as a principal's scrapbook is a fun exercise. Students are drawn to this interesting three-dimensional scrapbook as it "grows out" on a bulletin board near the principal's office. It becomes a folk history of the principal's school year.

Principal walkabouts—and follow-up. Before school, in the morning, in the afternoon, or after school, two or three weekly, 1-hour walkabouts into classrooms is a wonderful way of demonstrating that the principal knows where the true center of the school is. If time permits, complimentary follow-up notes should be sent to teachers, letting them know that you noticed their effective questions, the way they showed extra concern for a particular student, or that creative bulletin board display. This is an excellent time to pay attention to those aspects of the school culture that you value and want to promote. One principal carries a pad of Post-its™ and writes notes to give to others on these walks.

Providing buddies for teachers new to a school. How many times have we all said, "If only I knew that when I entered the school?" A buddy system for new teachers is an excellent way of giving the newcomer a head start regarding those questions that are not answered in the teacher's manual or during the faculty orientation meetings. It is recommended that the buddy not be a teacher on the same grade level or in the same department as the new teacher, because the newcomer will certainly get to know those teachers. A small stipend could be set aside for buddies to take the newcomers out for dinner or breakfast.

Building traditions to celebrate important values. October 24, United Nations Day, is an excellent opportunity for any school to unify around themes such as respecting all humanity, global unity, strength in diversity, exploring other cultures, or the work of the United Nations. A school should celebrate and commemorate the importance of respecting one another regardless of race, religion, or gender. Having the faculty working together on an activity such as United Nations Day reminds everyone of one of the most important reasons for schools: learning to get along with one another. There are, of course, other special days that can equally serve this type of theme, such as Earth Day or Martin Luther King Day. These days also give a school an opportunity to celebrate a theme that should go to the heart of schooling. A variety of activities stressing particular themes should occur throughout the day or possibly week of the special occasion. Student projects, films, and outside speakers should all be involved in the activities. School principals should do whatever they can to support faculty committees organizing these special events. Faculty, students, and parents all take an interest in the important values that are brought forth on these days and, one hopes, throughout the school year.

Student tutors and peer counseling. High school students enjoy tutoring youngsters, and elementary school students welcome help offered by older students. A relationship between a high school and middle or elementary school to develop a student-tutoring program is an extremely worthwhile activity. It is especially helpful for elementary students who need special attention and for high school students who can use a boost with their self-confidence. Often, these programs can be set up following the regular school day. Many secondary schools offer course credit for this type of work.

Peer counseling is also a very worthwhile activity for middle and high schools when organized by school guidance counselors who can provide meaningful orientation sessions and monitor the peer counseling during the year. The peer counselors work with fellow classmates who may need someone to talk with because of a personal difficulty or just someone who can help them get into gear regarding their studies. Peer counselors have even worked with upper elementary school students, especially in "putting out fires" on the playground. School principals should view these student-to-student programs as important opportunities to assist students in their social growth. Some high schools have peers operate a mock court system. Such judicial systems have greatly reduced a variety of crimes at the school site and in the immediate community.

School recognition assemblies. These assemblies should be low key and scheduled to recognize students for positive accomplishment during a 6-to-8-week period. Teachers submit student names for recognition by the principal for a variety of accomplishments: improved academic performance, an outstanding oral report, helping with a charity drive, persistence, making excellent contributions to class discussions, improved English for the nonnative speaker, and so on. The assembly gives the principal an opportunity to emphasize important themes (behavioral or academic), wish happy birthday to students and staff, and welcome newcomers or say good-bye to students leaving the school. A student musical interlude or class play may be a part of the assembly program.

Using Tips in Your Setting

The preceding ideas are all tried-and-true strategies used by principals and other school personnel to improve their effectiveness or positively affect the culture of the school. Although only some of the ideas may work in your school, all of the ideas are intended to identify themes or strategies that might lead principals and their professional colleagues to come up with successful activities for their schools. Perhaps one of the most powerful ways to continue this tradition is by organizing support groups of principals (no larger than 10 members) to meet regularly, problem solve, and share successful practices.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. What are some tips that you can offer to your colleagues?

2. What kind of events, activities, or strategies might be added to those mentioned in the chapter to positively affect the values of a school?
3. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas in this chapter?

(More tips: We encourage our readers to send in their tips for us to use for the second edition of this book. Send your tips to Pam Robbins, 112 Belmont Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.)

PART VI

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CONSTITUENCIES

17

Working With Parents and the Greater Community

When it comes to schools, everyone is an expert!

Effectively Communicating With Parents

A strong parent-school relationship is a valuable resource. This chapter examines facets of this relationship and offers several tools to enhance it. It is clearly the responsibility of all school personnel and especially principals to communicate effectively with parents. Thus schools need to take the initiative in this area. Often, school leaders and teachers are reactive with parents, or view the relationship as a back-burner priority. This should not be the case. Schools need to be proactive when communicating with parents regarding all school issues, from a new program to an individual child's progress report. For example, unsatisfactory grades on a report card should not come as a surprise to parents. Parents should be notified if their child is having difficulty well before the report card is distributed. School principals need to build this idea into the system and communicate ways this can be done.

When schools have good news to report, parents should hear about it. There is no better public relations effort than reporting good news. For example, an elementary school principal may hold recognition assemblies about every 6 to 8 weeks to positively reinforce students for a variety of accomplishments. These may include helping a new child in school, a first-rate math test score, having a painting sent to a museum, or improved behavior. Following up the assembly with notes to parents (completed by the secretary on a predesigned form) that compliment students and explain how the students were recognized sends a clear message concerning what is important in that school. Recognition assemblies, in this way, not only serve as public relations tools but communicate cultural values to parents as well.

When considering how parents view schools, it is interesting to note that as an institution, a school is one of the few professional organizations that all feel some familiarity with. We all attended school. The mysteries of medicine, for example, may cause parents to hesitate about questioning a particular diagnosis of their child. This is not the case when schools are concerned. Parents are likely to be much more assertive about questioning "the school system." One's own experiences in school, good and bad, have left many parents with firm ideas on how to approach schools and how schools should be run. For some parents, school was a very unpleasant experience, and the school principal may remind them of memories better forgotten. Thus a smile, handshake, and warm welcome can be important icebreakers for those who feel less comfortable in schools.

The role that parents play in schools varies greatly and depends on factors such as whether the school is private, public, elementary, middle, or high; the nature of the parent community; the administrative approach with parents; current issues; teacher comfort with parental involvement; and the degree of parent input formally built into the system for educational and political reasons. Thus parents may play roles ranging from the more traditional role of attending school only on open school night and during parent conferences, to serving on school boards and making general policy decisions, to becoming a member of a site-based management team involved in the everyday running of the school. Schools have the responsibility of informing parents about the various roles they can play.

Again, principals should be proactive with parents and not assume that they are an adversarial group. The overwhelming majority of parents will support the school as long as the school is communicating with them and has kept them aware of important issues. When there are interest groups that have a personal agenda that may interfere with the best interests of the students, it is very helpful to have a majority of parents familiar with the issues. When conflicts occur, a principal should look at the conflict or problem as a challenge and an opportunity to work out a solution. When working out solutions, it is important always to take the higher ground, not viewing the conflict as a personal battle. This, of course, is easier said than done.

When parents raise questions regarding general school issues or policies, the school philosophy or mission statement should play a major part in helping the principals and teachers remain focused regarding the direction of the school. This is why it is advisable to involve parents in mission building to create understanding and ownership. Certainly, change should be considered if the change will lead to progress, but school leaders constantly must consider the school mission when working with groups that are asking for change. A key question to ask is, Is the proposed change consistent with the school mission?

Additionally, it is important for the principal to actively listen to all ideas and factions. This does not mean that the principal is not aligned with a particular point of view—one should have strong feelings on significant issues—but the appearance of an inflexible position quickly tells parents that you are uninterested and not listening. It is important also for principals to meet, possibly monthly, with the president or head of the parent association. Particular parents, however, should not be seen as the principal's favorite or the decision makers for other parents.

Here is an interesting view from a principal on remaining neutral with parents:

> What I try to do is stay right on the fringes of all groups so that they're comfortable with me and me with them. But, I don't want to drink beer with them, or whittle at the courthouse, or hunt and fish or haul wood. I just want to be close enough to them so I can sit and be comfortable, and them with me. But, that's it. (A Principal's Voice)

Building Bridges With the Parent Community

To build up parent interest in a school, an open house before school officially opens or early in the year can be held for parents (and students) to meet the administration and teachers. This kind of positive interaction can help to build the bridges that will come in handy when communication on important issues is necessary.

Holding monthly parent coffees is an excellent proactive forum to discuss school issues. Although you cannot eliminate griping by some parents at these meetings, the forum can be used to present important school issues with the administration taking initiative. The following format has been used successfully to carry out monthly coffees: (a) general announcements updating parents on school events and student successes; (b) a presentation of interest to parents (e.g., on the new school reading program, how to deal with a student's fears, trends in education, etc.); (c) occasionally, breaking up into small groups to talk about the presentation issues; and (d) open comments and announcements by parents. Holding these meetings in the morning or evening with a 1-hour time limit lets the community know that the sessions will be both meaningful and doable, given a parent's busy schedule. Furthermore, it emphasizes the value placed on communication in a clear, concise way.

This format works because many parents attend coffees if they think a topic of substance is on the agenda. By setting a positive tone with planned presentations of interest to parents, the meetings proceed in a supportive climate. The climate of these morning or evening coffees can be an essential element in maintaining positive home-school relations throughout the year. It is important to stress that all parents should be welcome at the coffees. The more the general public knows about what is actually taking place in the school, the less chance there will be for rumors or inaccurate information to be spread around.

Additionally, these coffees can serve as important opportunities—within a structured environment—to gain parent input on a hot issue. For example, coffees can be used to exchange ideas on the adoption of a new science program or the institution of major changes in a disciplinary or homework policy. Principals can open these coffees to parent ideas, letting them know that the ideas will be brought back to the professional committees to consider. Often, parents make excellent suggestions that can become part of the new policy or curriculum change.

Although it is more convenient for school personnel and many parents to hold the coffee on site, principals should consider parents' homes and community centers as other venues for coffees. For some constituencies, a community center may seem less threatening and an indication that the school is reaching out to the community. This may be particularly true in some low-income settings.

The traditional Open School or Open House Nights and Parent Conference Days provide unique opportunities for schools to show what they are all about. Creative variations during these traditional activities can have very positive long-range results in the parent community. For example, teachers should be encouraged to show parents videos of students working and student-teacher interaction in their classes. Parents appreciate the effort made by teachers who prepare videos and love to see their children in action. Also, the use of student portfolios displaying the work and progress of each student significantly affects parents. One parent, after viewing her child's portfolio, remarked, "I wasn't aware that my child was capable of that work." Furthermore, the walls of a school should be lined with student work every day, and especially on these special days. Student work should be the heart of these events. Open School Night, if organized to start with presentations by the administration and parent association, provides a special opportunity for principals to reassert the vision of the school and publicly thank and recognize the important role that teachers and parents play in the lives of children.

A school might consider a Saturday morning workshop sponsored by the administration and teachers for parents to provide information on an important topic or topics. Topics might be faculty or parent generated and include helping children with homework, the role of technology in education, discussing learning styles, or suggestions to instill greater responsibility at home. In settings where parents' own experiences with school were so negative that they feared school, the school has extended an outreach program. In Hawaii, for instance, school personnel took blankets to the local park and set up learning stations for parents.

Comparing Parent Roles: Elementary Versus High School

It is interesting to compare how parents of elementary and high school students view their roles as advocates of their children. In working with elementary school parents, the immediacy of academic "success" usually is not a major issue. The elementary school principal can emphasize the importance of developmental stages and help parents to recognize that it will take time for the children to master certain concepts and skills. Parent workshops and the intervention of effective guidance counselors are much appreciated by most parents of young children as they are highly motivated to find out what is developmentally appropriate for their children. On the other hand, principals must be ready for the minority of elementary school parents who feel that they need to intervene early in their child's school "career" to make sure they are early readers and get into the "best" schools and classes right from preschool or kindergarten. When working with these parents, it is important to review developmental literature and stress the importance of minimizing pressure and frustrations for young children so they have the opportunity to develop cognitively, socially, physically, and emotionally and possess a positive feeling about their initial school experience. At the same time, it is important to be sensitive to the parents' feelings about these issues and celebrate their support.

To recommend patience to parents of adolescents in a high school setting may be unrealistic. When an adolescent is a junior or senior, time and the immediate consequences of good or bad grades are a greater reality. Immediate decisions must be made about continuing high school, going to college, enlisting in the armed forces, getting a job, or seeking vocational training. Thus, in a high school setting, most parents and their children are much more interested in product than in process. This emphasis on product may be unfortunate when considering the long-range goals of education, but it is reality because of the need to make important decisions about a teenager's future. Also, high school students, for obvious reasons, will play a much greater part in determining their future than will elementary students, yet they still benefit from the insights of others. Moreover, the relationship between the teenager and his parents will have a great bearing on the role the parent will play in the school regarding the child's education. If there are problems at home, you can almost guarantee that the problems will emerge in school or that the parents' relationship with the school will be either strained or nonexistent. It is very important that a school does not give up working with a parent who may appear helpless in dealing with a teenager. On the other hand, if the school is having difficulty relating to a teenager, the school should seek assistance from parents who have a strong, positive relationship with their child. Often, the school counselor can play an invaluable role in giving the parent strategies and bringing the student and parent together.

Additional Ways to Bring Parents Into School

Involving parents in school-related activities can build bridges with the parent community and help the school in areas in which resources may be scarce. To illustrate, parents can serve as volunteers to help with tutoring, with field trips, in the cafeteria, or with transportation problems (be sure to check on vehicle insurance). Volunteer tutoring is especially helpful. Using retired community members for tutoring can be a wonderful experience for both the student and the retiree. It is important, though, that when tutoring takes place, volunteers are aware of the importance of confidentiality and working hand in hand with the classroom teacher. The school, at the appropriate time, should make sure that parents and other community volunteers receive necessary training in instructional and curricular strategies and are recognized for their work. For example, workshops could be held reviewing the primary objectives of the reading or math programs, examples of confidentiality, and basic dos and don'ts about working with children to support their self-esteem. In one school, parents and community members joined together to create adaptive devices, such as communication boards, to support special education students participating in inclusion programs.

A parent or community resource file can be set up by each school to note parents and community members who have a particular expertise or hobby that they can share with the school. Having adults from the community visit classrooms to tell about their careers or hobbies brings the real world to the classroom and lets students know that there is a clear link between what they are doing and what is taking place in the world of work. Furthermore, it fosters great public relations, and the children, parents, community members, and school all benefit from the experience. One school invites students to shadow parents at work and then participate in a forum in which critical skills are discussed.

Also, booster clubs have been an important traditional way for parents to become involved in schools. Frequently, these clubs help with sports activities, but these organizations can also help to purchase a computer for a school, raise funds to improve playground equipment, or help to repaint the walls of a school. The variety of possibilities are limited only by one's imagination.

Many parents do not reach out to a school because they do not know how they might help. Some schools facilitate the reach-out effort by sending a list of suggestions home. Suggestions range from supporting the school on campus to assisting students by sponsoring a homework group. Working parents may appreciate that even by saving labels from cans—something they can do with limited time—they can help. A school starting a new science program asked parents for jars, lids, and bottles to build up the science resource room supplies.

In summary, effective communication with parents is a primary responsibility of each school. Why? Because it is very difficult to succeed with children if relations with parents are unsatisfactory. We need to create a partnership. So often, a school looks to what parents can do for the school. We must also examine what the school can do for parents. By taking a proactive stance, schools send the message that "we care, we want to work with children, and we welcome parent and community input." In the end, the school principal is in the most effective position to lead the way in taking the initiative with teachers, parents, and the larger community. Building this bridge can enhance learning opportunities for parents, teachers, students, and the principal and enrich the overall school climate.

Broadening School Support

Although developing relationships with parents is essential, schools need to reach out to the broader community as well. This provides opportunities to counter the traditional skepticism about the effectiveness of schools in communities ("Schools just ain't what they use to be!"). Also, it addresses the need to get the public to support schools and enables the school to maximize the use of existing and potential human and financial resources.

In pursuit of building broader support, schools need to communicate with a wider circle of people. This may represent reaching out to an audience with whom they have not had contact and beginning a conversation. One principal suggested, "Schools need to meet folks on their turf." For example, the reach-out effort may extend to the beauty parlor or barber shop, senior citizen center, local business associations, the chamber of commerce, and churches, mosques, or synagogues. This type of effort can generate human resources and financial support for the schools.

Young children and older students can visit nursing homes, sing for the adults, provide companionship for walks, and play board games with elders. Senior citizens or disabled veterans served by community organizations can be invited to schools for special programs at the holiday season or even special programs just for them. When appropriate, staff development opportunities in a school can include participants from the business community who can benefit from the experience (e.g., learning style workshop). And, as noted earlier, people in a nursing home or retirement community can tutor children. For these senior citizens, this experience can be most rewarding and meaningful. For students, these experiences build important values about reaching out and serving others.

Community-Based Organizations[1]

In urban areas, other than the direct help of parents, community-based organizations (CBOs) may provide the greatest direct support to schools. This is especially true in areas with large numbers of at-risk youngsters. Often, the organizations provide support that cannot be offered at home. CBOs provide direct or indirect assistance to schools, individual students, parents, and teachers. The organizations usually work in collaboration with a school to enhance educational opportunities and provide the kind of individual or family aid that can make the difference between dropping out of school and making it. CBOs provide support to help with such questions as Where do I go for a job? Where can I get adequate day care? or Where can I find food or shelter?

Both public and private agencies are involved in community-based support efforts. These may include religious groups, health centers, hospitals, neighborhood associations, women's centers, universities, youth centers, art organizations, museums, YMCAs, merchant associations, drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers, and sport associations.

Often, major city school districts or local, state, and federal agencies will list the CBOs in a particular area that provide resources to schools. For example, the Board of Education of the City of New York publishes a *Directory of Community-Based Organizations* that includes more than 100 organizations that provide services to schools. These organizations usually receive financial support primarily from the United Way or the board of education.

The services in the New York area are broad and attempt to meet educational, family, and community needs. Services available for students and adults include assistance for students at risk of dropping out of school; academic support for first-time youthful offenders; support for academically talented youths in need of college scholarships; training for substance abuse prevention; education for adults and their pre-Kindergarten children; service to combat alcohol and drug abuse for elementary school children; nutrition awareness for school staff; homework assistance for at-risk youths; employment preparation; special employment preparation for disabled students; providing child care so parents can attend school conferences; programs on effective parenting skills, coping with domestic violence, stress reduction, and crisis intervention; and education in conflict resolution for children, parents, and staff.

Seeking School Support Through Educational Grants

In addition to CBOs, another source of assistance for individual schools can be public or private grants. Millions of dollars in grants are available to schools from public and private sources for worthy and innovative school programs. These grants may be from federal, state, or community agencies; from private industries or foundations; or from different educational associations. Often, a grant is targeted for a specific community or general region in which an industry operates. The hope is that the grant will eventually "pay off" for the community or possibly the corporation. One source of information about grants is the weekly report *Educational Grants Alert* published by Capital Publications, Inc. A typical issue will have grants from federal agencies (e.g., Labor or Commerce Departments, Health and Human Services) and many industrial or private industries and foundations (e.g., Scott Paper, Danforth Foundation, Phillips Petroleum). Grants can range from a few hundred dollars to tens of thousands of dollars and may be available for early childhood learning, innovative educational reforms, environmental issues, consensus building, substance abuse education, teen pregnancy prevention and assistance, after-school and summer activities for inner-city youths, professional teacher reform, and math, science, and technology projects. Interestingly, with the move toward site-based management, grant proposals often need to be approved by district personnel, principals, teachers, and union and parent representatives.

Unfortunately, the needs of many students today extend far beyond the resources that schools have traditionally offered. Creative school leadership, in which principals reach out to the community, can bring a variety of assets to students. Resources can range from programs that enrich academic and extracurricular activities to essential survival services for those students in need.

Collectively, through relationships with parents and the broader community, including public and private agencies, the school can provide a variety of services to enhance student life in and out of school.

Note

1. We would like to thank Richard Shustrin from the New York City School System for his assistance with this section.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. Thinking about the school in which you work, in what ways might parents be involved?
2. Does your school look to parents for support and provide support for parents?
3. What are some possible risks when parents play an active role in schools? What are some possible benefits?
4. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on ideas presented in this chapter?

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Those Wonderful Kids

Our school goes home at night.

A PRINCIPAL'S VOICE

It is not the building or instructional resources that make a school; it is the students, teachers, and parents. A school is made up of people. When the doors close, we only have a building, an empty shell without a soul. The soul of the school is the kids.

In this chapter, we will try something a bit unusual. It is often through anecdotes about children that we get our greatest insights regarding their needs and how they think. Humorous anecdotes are especially interesting and fun. We find relief in the comical stories of children as they remind us of our special connection to kids and the joys of innocence. Thus a portion of the chapter will be spent on anecdotes about students from elementary school through high school. We will then discuss ways to structure student success by encouraging greater student responsibility. Finally, this chapter offers key considerations for developing an effective school discipline plan.

The Challenge of Excellence and Equality

Success in American schools is a much greater challenge than in many other nations because our intent is to reach for both student excellence and equality. As we move further away from ability grouping and mainstream most students, our democratic ideals can become a reality in the classroom. The success of the cooperative learning movement is pinned, to a great extent, on the value of equality for all.

The phrase "late bloomer" is often used in American schools because a student in high school or even college may be succeeding for the first time. In a school system that tracks students early for high schools, colleges, and careers, the late bloomer does not have a chance. Reaching for both excellence and equality is a tall order and, in many circles, quite controversial, but it is a noble goal and one that very few nations seek to attain.

Let us talk about kids for a few minutes. First of all, to consider kids, it is important to get into their shoes. A good way is to try to recall your own school experience. What do you remember about school? Do you recall a specific class? An incident in the hallway? What special events do you remember? Which teacher had the greatest effect on you? Why? As a school principal, are you promoting the kinds of experiences for students in school that reflect your own positive memories of school?

As ideas flash through your mind, consider what you remember about your school principals. We all remember our interactions as students with principals. How many of us, when growing up, never saw the principal except on the stage during school assemblies or in his office because of a disciplinary infraction? One of the authors recalls, as an eighth grader, playing with drumsticks on the school stairs. All of a sudden, two legs appeared on the stairs. They belonged to the principal. Fortunately, the principal's reprimand (for pounding out a popular tune on the stairs) was in a soft tone—he had obviously decided that this was not a major infraction. More than 30 years later, the feeling of that incident remains!

Those Kids and Their Stories

A principal recalls many memories of students. At high school graduation, pride flows when the student speeches surpass those of celebrities and politicians who are asked to address the senior class. The humor of simulated U.S. presidential debates by students in middle or high school always brings a smile to the principal's face. In one example, the principal recalled the vehicles with their tops down bringing the "candidates" to the debate accompanied by "secret service" personnel with secure earphones (Sony Walkmans). The goal of both excellence and equality emerges when a teacher, assessing students for entrance to calculus class, mentions to the principal that a student new to the school who did not have the grades and did poorly in the assessment test asked some great questions during the test. The teacher indicates the student should be given a shot at taking calculus. The student eventually received a "B" in the course. High expectations pay off!

The elementary school stories often tend to be comical, yet valuable.

During the morning of the first day of school, one principal walked into every classroom to greet students. He mentioned to the students how lucky they were to have Ms. Smith as their second-grade teacher and that this would be a special year for them with this special teacher. A little girl smiled and raised her hand. The principal confidently called on her. She said, "You said the same thing last year."

In the beginning of the year, one child new to the school saw the principal a few days after school began as he was walking downtown. The child looked at the principal with an odd expression on his face and then smiled and said, "Do you know who you are? You're the principal!"

A first grader walked up to his teacher a few days before the school year ended and said, "You know, in the beginning of the year I didn't like you. But now I like you better than I like my dog!"

In kindergarten class, a teacher told the student that 10 bears were going on a picnic. They had only eight cups. Would that be enough cups? All the students, except one child, said no. When the single child was called on to explain his answer, he said that eight would be enough because "they could share."

While saying good-bye to students by the school buses one day, another principal asked Nicholas, a second grader, "Did you learn a lot in school today?" He said no. (The principal was immediately disappointed.) Then Nicholas added, "You don't learn a lot in one day. You learn a lot in a whole year."

A library teacher shared a story in which she was explaining to the children that previously, it was legal to separate Blacks and Whites in some parts of the United States. She asked the children to state the word that indicates a separation between races. The children could not come up with the word. So she gave them a clue and said that the word starts with the letter *s*. A student raised her hand and said that the *s* word for separating the races is the word *stupid*!

The Right to Be a Child and to Make Mistakes

Janucz Korczak is one of the best known European educators from the first half of the century. He was a Polish doctor, teacher, and great advocate of children's rights. Tragically, he died with his students in the concentration camps. Korczak was so famous the Nazis offered to let him escape the camps, but he chose to remain with his students, knowing that they would be arrested and later murdered. This story is told of him:

> In 1919 Korczak was giving a series of lectures at the Institute of Special Pedagogy in Warsaw. His first lecture was titled, "The Heart of the Child." He asked the assembled group to accompany him with a child he was holding by the hand to the x-ray room of the children's hospital. The child was placed behind a fluoroscope and the lights in the room were dimmed. Everyone assembled could see only one light. It was the light of the child's heartbeat. Korczak then stated: "Look, and remember in the future, sometime, when you are tired or angry, when children become unbearable and distract you from your thoughts . . . remember what a child's heart looks like." (quote from Kulawiec in Brendtro & Hinders, 1990, p. 239)

Korczak also wrote a Bill of Rights for children, which included the admonition that "children have a right to make mistakes." This is a key point to keep in mind when encouraging students to take risks as they answer questions or respond in class. In the end, if school does not provide an environment where it is safe to make mistakes and learn from them, where might this occur?

For students to grow intellectually, they must be encouraged to become risk takers and make mistakes. Therefore, we must help children to overcome their concern about failing in front of classmates or their teachers. If failure can be viewed as a source for learning, rather than a defeat, it takes on a positive air. This cannot be accomplished without caring. We have to nurture students so they are not afraid of trying to experiment, even though they may not succeed. Trial and error are part of learning. The risk for society is that a fear of failure may inhibit a child's desire to take on new challenges or creative enterprise. Many important intellectual leaps for our society have come about as the result of risk-taking, intuitive, and creative behaviors.

Structuring Student Success

When thinking about the avenues to follow to encourage student success, schools should encourage behaviors that include a degree of responsibility (and that degree will fluctuate with age and maturity) within a nurturing environment. The environment, as much as possible, must address student behavior in a positive manner so students feel a commitment to the order and structure necessary in schools.

Involving students in worthwhile community or school projects that contribute to improving the quality of one's life or the school environment can teach responsibility and be the most valuable activity that students experience in school. Activities that focus on the less fortunate—helping the elderly, cleaning up the environment, and tutoring other students—can help students to feel better about themselves and take pride in the school that encourages these outreach activities. At some middle and high schools, students, along with teachers, serve poor children in the neighborhood every week. They share snacks with the children, teach them health habits, tell stories, watch videos, and enjoy one another.

Peer counseling in high schools and tutoring by high school students is a wonderful way to teach responsibility and give students an opportunity to feel good about themselves. Tutoring can give students who may not be popular in other arenas (e.g., sports, music) a chance to feel good about themselves and recognize their talents. The tutoring can be one-on-one or with a class. When high schools can coordinate tutoring programs with middle or elementary schools, it is very satisfying to see high school students assisting a teacher by working with a few students or serving as a "buddy" to an elementary school student.

Elementary school principals should strongly consider instituting formal student government activities or informal representative assemblies, just as they occur in middle and high schools. Of course, the level of activity or structure will not be as sophisticated as the model for older students, but similar principles and activities can occur. These include such events as charity drives, cleaning up the school, fund-raisers to increase school resources, and presentations in which students make suggestions to improve the school. The student organization can study some of the principles of American government or American history to apply to their activities. The school principal and teacher advisors can meet with the students periodically during lunch to support the students and teachers organizing the activity. The National Association of Elementary School Principals distributes literature on supporting an elementary school student government.

Discipline Guidelines

Another aspect of structuring student success rests in a sound discipline program, often one that reflects the input of students. Such programs enable students to be clear about expectations and allow them the information they need to be successful in school. Specific school rules must, of course, align with federal, state, district, or local school board policies. School law and the legal system often are in flux, yet general guidelines concerning the extent of the school's responsibility with regard to discipline and student rights must be followed by school principals. Taking a school law class and following legal updates in principalship journals is a must. Familiarity with due process laws, student rights, and access to a lawyer with school law training have become imperative for today's schools.

When developing disciplinary guidelines for a school, consider the following:

1. State the guidelines positively and with clarity. A list of don'ts sets a negative tone.
2. Except when absolutely necessary (see Guideline 3), avoid guidelines that are too specific; consider general principles that would include specific offenses.
3. Guidelines that should be absolutely specific should include the right to undisturbed teaching and learning; total intolerance for physical violence and drugs; hurtful, sexual, or racist language; academic dishonesty; and vandalism.
4. If you are not sure that a particular guideline can be enforced or is the responsibility of the school, consider leaving the guideline out (e.g., students are not permitted to smoke within three blocks of the school).

5. Safety should be a prime consideration when developing guidelines; a school must first be safe.
6. If students can be involved in developing guidelines, their commitment will increase—however, remember that student responsibilities go along with student rights.
7. All guidelines should have a rational basis; "It has always been a rule" is not good enough.
8. School rules should align with the school mission.
9. School rules must reflect district, state, and federal legal statutes.

The following is an example of one elementary school's rules:

Students care and come to school prepared to learn and to do their best.

In order to do this we

- Are polite and helpful
- Take care of our school
- Respect others—teachers, aides, and students
- Care about ourselves and take responsibility for our behavior
- Practice good health habits
- Enjoy games in the proper areas
- Are responsible for our belongings

Students are "Safe, Smart, Clean, and Friendly"

The following section of the *American Embassy School Board Policy Manual* was written by administrators, teachers, board members, and members of the high school student association. The document is based on the premise that although students have many rights, these rights are meaningless unless each individual accepts the responsibilities that accompany rights.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

The American Embassy School [AES] endorses the belief that education should be directed to the strengthening of respect for human rights and the fulfillment of students' responsibilities. All students shall be informed of their rights and responsibilities.

AES is a community of learners, and in any effective community, rights and responsibilities balance one another. Consequently, at AES, student rights and responsibilities are interdependent. The rights are dependent upon each member of the student body exercising the responsibilities of respect for the educational process, consideration for others, honesty, and accepting the consequences of one's actions.

In order for students to be able to conform to the community's standards of conduct, rights, responsibilities, and expectations must be articulated. At the same time, it is impossible to describe and specify all situations, hence common sense and trust must be used. Indeed, an atmosphere of mutual trust, synonymous with the sense of community for which we strive, is best achieved by establishing a few clearly described universal expectations rather than a host of rules which anticipate misconduct.

Students' Rights

1. Students are entitled to all the rights set forth in this policy, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status.
2. Students have the right to pursue education in a climate of mutual trust, respect, and interpersonal concern where openness and integrity prevail.
3. Students have the right to a meaningful education which will prepare them to be confident and independent learners in the lifelong search for understanding.
4. Students have the right to a curriculum which is relevant to the world in which they live and a right to provide input into determining that curriculum.

5. Students have a right to safety of both person and property, including the right to safe and clean school facilities.
6. Students have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.
7. Students have the right to protection from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home, and correspondence.
8. Students have the right to freedom of opinion and expression. This right includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas, unless this would violate the rights of others.
9. Students have the right to express an opinion and have that opinion considered in any matter affecting a student or students.
10. Every student has the right not to be a witness against himself or herself.
11. In any action against a student that could result in expulsion, the student has the right to obtain assistance for his or her defense and should be informed of that right.
12. Students have the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, unless this would violate the rights of others.
13. Students have the right to choose freely whether to belong to an association.
14. Students have the right to confidentiality of individual student academic records.
15. Students have the right to confidentiality of counseling sessions and records.
16. Students have the right to inspect and review all academic records directly related to the student.
17. Students may seek a correction or deletion where a record is felt to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the student.
18. Students have the right to seek representation on the Board of Governors and may attend any committee meeting when dealing with matters directly related to students.
19. Students have the right to have their views solicited and considered by teachers, administrators, and the Board of

Governors when dealing with matters directly related to students.

Students' Responsibilities

Students safeguard their rights by taking full responsibility for their actions. Students are responsible for their own behavior. They must care for the individual rights of others and help to provide a safe and positive school environment within which to learn. Specifically, students have the responsibility to

1. Conduct themselves with honesty and integrity
2. Exercise self-discipline
3. Be courteous, communicate respectfully to other members of the school community, and treat with respect the views of others
4. Respect the educational process and learning environment by refraining from any classroom behavior which diminishes the rights and opportunities of others to receive an education
5. Act in a manner which safeguards the health and well-being of others
6. Respect the property of fellow students and the property of the school
7. Dress in a neat attire which takes into account cultural sensitivities

Effective Classroom Management: Handling Disciplinary Problems

The very best disciplinary guidelines may reduce, but will not prevent, disruptive behavior. Handling disruptive behavior is certainly one of the most difficult and potentially controversial aspects of a principal's job. Helping students behave properly is one of the most important aspects of our job. Setting limits and showing a caring attitude when disciplinary problems occur can be a very important lesson for all students. Major responsibilities for principals, then, include helping teachers develop effective classroom management plans and consistent schoolwide plans as well as working directly with the more difficult disciplinary problems.

Before discussing management plans, it is important to define effective classroom management: *Effective classroom management is the conscious use of proactive strategies and procedures to help students behave in a way to provide maximum learning opportunities for each student in the class.* Through such a management system, students are encouraged to develop skills for self-discipline. Based on this definition, attention should be devoted to behavior management at both an individual and schoolwide student level. Thus there should be an overall school procedure for handling disruptive behavior and specific recommendations to teachers on how to resolve problems with individual students. Both situations, however, must always be viewed as "embedded in a social system; it [a disciplinary problem] is never an isolated event" (Ross, 1981, p. 211). This is a critical point because principals and teachers must act on the assumption that every student is a witness to the decision. In this setting, fairness and a justifiable rationale are essential.

The social context is especially important when examining Curwin and Mendler's (1988) "80-15-5 Principle" describing the typical classroom. Curwin and Mendler maintain that 80% of the students infrequently break school rules and come to school prepared to learn, 15% break rules somewhat frequently and show inconsistent motivational tendencies, whereas 5% are frequent rule breakers and come to school with almost no motivation or direction in their lives. The social context is critical here as the teacher has the seemingly insurmountable task of keeping the 80% motivated while using appropriate disciplinary strategies to control the 15% and firmly deter the 5%. Curwin and Mendler believe that the key is helping the 15% to improve their behavior without antagonizing the other students.

When developing a disciplinary plan, it is, of course, a good idea to examine what research has told us about what effective teachers do to maintain discipline in a caring environment. Curwin and Mendler (1988) review the research of Emmer, Evertson, and Anderson to stress "that effective teachers teach classroom rules and procedures, monitor compliance with the rules, follow through with consequences quickly and consistently, establish a system of student responsibility and accountability for work, communicate information clearly, and organize instructional activities" (p. 13). Ross (1981) also stresses the importance of clear rules but adds that praise (e.g., catch the child being good) and ignoring undesirable behavior when possible have proven to be effective management techniques.

The "catching the child being good" strategy is the cornerstone of Lee Canter's (1989) Assertive Discipline Plan. Canter (1989) observed "that, above all, the master teachers were assertive; that is, they taught students how to behave. They established clear rules for the classroom, they communicated those rules to the students, and they taught the students how to follow them." Canter recommends a three-step discipline cycle that includes teaching specific desired class behaviors, positive repetition and reinforcement of desired behaviors, and the use of negative consequences if repeated attempts to promote positive behavior have failed. He stresses that "as a general rule, a teacher shouldn't administer a disciplinary consequence to a student until the teacher has reinforced at least two students for the appropriate behavior" (Canter, 1989, p. 59). The strategy of catching the child being good raises, also, the important issue of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation. If, while catching the child being good, the teacher uses too many extrinsic rewards, students may become dependent on external reinforcement and teacher behaviors that diminish the value of being good simply because it is the right thing to do. Too often in school we resort to instant extrinsic rewards and reinforcement (e.g., stickers, exaggerated praise) to promote desired behaviors. We need to adopt long-term strategies to foster intrinsic behaviors that encourage the joy of learning, or the personal satisfaction of reading a book or helping a classmate who is having difficulty with a math problem.

Based on suggestions by Curwin and Mendler (1988) and shared experiences of many educators, the following steps are recommended for principals and teachers when consequences need to be administered to an individual student:

1. In a balanced tone, let the student know what he or she did wrong.
2. Ask the student to explain why the behavior is unacceptable. If his or her answer is inadequate, explain why the behavior is unacceptable.
3. Discuss the consequence and how it will be administered. Begin with the least threatening intervention and, when possible, give the student a choice of consequences.
4. If necessary, describe and model the desired behavior.

5. Ask the student if he or she has anything else to share with you.
6. Finish the meeting by emphasizing that although you are displeased with the unacceptable behavior, you separate that behavior from your positive feelings about the student.
7. If the inappropriate behavior continues, reflect on the environment in which the behavior occurred. Should changes take place?
8. Communicating with the parent should be considered depending on the frequency or degree of the misbehavior.

When viewing the big picture, principals should remind teachers, and especially new teachers, that everyone experiences disciplinary problems—and one should not take the problems personally. Also, teachers should keep administrators informed when problems occur frequently. Such happenings usually indicate that the student feels troubled. This warrants further study. It is the sign of a good administrator when a teacher can discuss a disciplinary problem with the administrator without worrying that the administrator will think less of the teacher because of the problem. Although at times it may be frustrating or inconvenient, a principal must be there for teachers.

Collecting Information About Students: Comparing the Elementary and High School Models

When working with students because of disciplinary, academic, or social problems, it is interesting to consider the differences in collecting information between the elementary and high school models. The elementary school model, in most situations, easily lends itself to this process because, in most cases, the regular classroom teacher can supply almost all the pertinent information to a principal, guidance counselor, or other member of a pupil service team. The teacher who spends several hours a day with the child is able to observe the various dimensions of the child's personality, not only with regard to academic strengths and weaknesses but also concerning social and emotional needs. In high school, it is often necessary to have a meeting with six or seven teachers to gain an accurate view of a student's performance. Just arranging this forum can be very difficult.

One should not assume, however, that the extended time spent with an elementary school child is always an advantage. If a teacher has difficulty with a particular child or if their personalities clash, it can be an unfortunate situation for everyone concerned—especially the child. That teacher may very well develop and provide a biased view, detrimental to the child. In fact, an argument can be made that the variety of teachers necessary to assess a high school student can be an advantage, because the number of teachers involved provides a kind of "reliability factor" concerning the child's performance. If several teachers draw similar conclusions about a student's performance, their assessment is probably accurate. When facing a difficult decision concerning a child, many principals have often wished that both the elementary and high school models were within reach; clearly both models provide advantages.

Final Thoughts on "Those Kids"

When considering our quest for excellence and equality, it might help to consider the ideas of Howard Gardner (1985) that remind us to recognize that students may display "intelligence" in different areas. Gardner asks us to consider seven separate areas of possible intelligence, including the verbal/linguistic, mathematical/logical, musical, bodily/kinesthetic, visual/spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal areas. When we recognize that students' talents may vary and show our respect for various talents whether they be linguistic or musical, we are telling students that we admire them for their strengths and are not simply looking to find their weaknesses. The popular disciplinary refrain to "catch the kids being good" should go beyond discipline and into the multidimensional intelligence areas—"catch their strengths" and help students build from areas of strength.

Students remember not only the rules but how they are treated and what others think of them. Caine and Caine (1991) remind us that creating a positive climate in school can directly affect how students think and function. They stress that under threat, the brain actually "downshifts" and does not perform at its maximum capacity. Thus communicating often with students, setting a supportive tone in class, and sending positive nonverbal signals are as critical as the rules. Finally, learning what responsibility is all about is a lifelong challenge. If schools can foster responsibility through positive guidelines and valuable activities, then the possibility of developing the tools for lifelong learning can become a reality.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. What do you remember about your school principal(s)?
2. What humorous anecdotes can you recall about students in your school that tell a larger story?
3. What are some guidelines that should be included in a student disciplinary code?
4. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

PART VII

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL ISSUES

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The Newcomer to the Principalship

> *There were some days, you know, I can't describe this feeling. It's like when you're a kid and you're about to go up [to bat], and there are three guys on base, and it was the bottom of the ninth, and there were two out, and you were up, and there were two strikes on you. Your stomach has this feeling like, boy, I got to do it! There were some days I had that feeling all day long in my stomach. And that is a bad feeling.*
>
> COMMENT FROM A FIRST-YEAR PRINCIPAL

First-time principals face dual problems: the difficulties encountered by newcomers to any organization and the daily challenges facing all principals. However, because of the importance of the principalship, schools obviously cannot afford to suspend operations while new principals are learning the ropes. Thus it is crucial to identify the problems that are especially challenging for new principals and offer practical suggestions to assist new and prospective principals. Many of the ideas discussed herein will be useful to experienced principals who move to different schools as well for superintendents and veteran principals serving as mentors for new principals.

Problems That Challenge New Principals

The literature on the principalship indicates there are several areas of difficulty that seem to frequently surface with new principals (Alvy, 1983). In the following paragraphs, these difficulties are described, not to scare off the prospective principal or newcomer but to reduce their anxiety about what they might face. For newcomers, the information may be especially welcome and stress reducing as they will notice they are not alone regarding the problems they are experiencing. The chapter will then move forward with suggestions to acquaint prospective as well as new principals and offer some practical suggestions to get started on the job.

The limitations of preservice training. When moving into the principal's role, newcomers usually find that the preservice training could not possibly duplicate all of the challenges that one immediately faces on the job. For example, there are many unique situations in each school, regarding staff relations, student needs, and the physical plant, so that on-the-job trial and error is simply a necessity. For some, it has been helpful to experience the realistic and practical training provided through a vice principalship, administrative internship, or administrative assistantship. Preservice courses generally do not address how to change a school bus route or operate a fire drill system. Yet these frequently are the responsibilities of a principal. Universities and principals' centers are working to improve their ability to provide more realistic experiences (e.g., case study analysis, simulations) so prospective principals are more familiar with some of the challenges they will face. Increasingly, school districts and universities are pursuing mentoring programs to link up prospective or new principals with seasoned veterans to help newcomers face the job challenges.

It's lonely at the top. New principals are not only on unfamiliar ground but will find that by virtue of their position at the top of the management hierarchy in their school, they do not have professional peers with similar responsibilities in their immediate environment. Quite simply, there may be no one else around who can relate to the problems being faced. Role models and on-site assistance may be desired but not possible. "I felt like I was alone. I couldn't go across roles and confide with somebody" (A Principal's Voice). The absence of readily available role models and adequate sources of assistance may present particular problems to females new to the principalship. Because of sex role stereotyping in our society, there are fewer females in administrative posts, and the male-dominated old boys' network is still difficult to break.

> As the only woman principal in this district last year, when I would go to a principals' meeting, all the dirty jokes would

> end when I walked into a room. And you know that's sex stereotyping. And . . . I would kind of laugh about it, and knew I was accepted at Christmas time when one of the administration members told me a dirty joke, knew that I was "part of the clan." (A Principal's Voice)

Ironically, although the principal may be lonely with regard to having a professional peer on the same organizational level, a principal is anything but alone during the school day. The principal is constantly interacting with teachers, students, secretaries, parents, salespeople, student teachers, and any strangers who happen to walk into the school. Thus, for someone who enjoys human interaction, the principalship can be very rewarding and an opportunity to meet interesting people from various walks of life. Yet opportunities to sit down at the lunch table with other principals may occur only at districtwide meetings or at annual state or national association meetings.

Time management—finding time to visit classes. It is an understatement to say new principals quickly learn that there are frequent and various demands on their time. For many newcomers, time management becomes their most significant problem. Unfortunately, the first casualty of a new principalship may be the instructional responsibility of taking the time to visit classes (Alvy, 1983). If one's early actions are a predictor of future actions, it may be difficult for newcomers to reverse patterns that develop early in their principalship. Managing one's time, then, becomes a challenge to be addressed from the first day on the job.

New principals may also feel resentment about the amount of time required of them. Why do I have to return to school in the evening? Should I take the phone off the hook during dinner? What happened to my summer holiday? "I've been surprised at the amount of time, and weekends that this particular superintendent has asked me to give. . . . It surprises me and that's the one thing about the job that bothers me" (A Principal's Voice).

Staff relations and introducing change. There is always some nervousness when a principal is new to a school—especially when a first-timer takes over responsibilities. The nervousness, of course, is mutual. Newcomers usually find that staff resistance to change is one of the major obstacles they face. The resistance may be even more pronounced with the more experienced teacher veterans who may comment, "We tried this two principals ago." Implementing change may be especially hard for the principal who is hired in-house. Relationships with long-time friends may have to change. In this context, the teacher evaluation process can be a particularly difficult hurdle to overcome.

Satisfying the various constituencies. Teachers, students, superintendents, unions, school boards, parent associations, specific parent interest groups, businesses, and other community groups often have conflicting interests. Just trying to find out what these individuals and groups desire is a considerable task for the new principal. Principals may be tempted to state simply, "My responsibility is to follow the directives of the superintendent who is acting on the authority of the board in the best interest of the students," but reality tells us that interest groups will not be satisfied with this bureaucratic response. Various constituencies will disagree on the purpose of schooling. Group conflict and the consequences are a given. The principal must manage the fallout of conflict.

Unrealistic expectations—making immediate instructional changes. When hired for the principalship, one usually can take pride in knowing that he or she was selected for the job over some pretty stiff competition. Also, with all of the literature on the principal as instructional leader, often the newcomer hopes to make a quick and significant curriculum change or implement an instructional innovation. However, these ideas usually will need time to be nurtured as staff members adjust to the newcomer and the newcomer learns about the culture of the school. Thus implementing immediate curricular or instructional changes will probably have to wait until the principal has the opportunity to assess the context and build trust with staff members. For a change to be institutionalized, one should know the organization well—the mission, teachers, parents, students, and resources—so the change can become a part of the way "business is conducted" at the school. This is, however, usually a disappointment for the first-timer who is ready to jump in and immediately have an impact on the organization (Jentz, Cheever, & Fisher, 1980).

Meeting individual student needs. Principals and teachers want to address the needs of each student. However, it is the teacher in the classroom who experiences the day-to-day challenges of moving the whole class forward while addressing the needs of each child. For most teachers, decisions for the whole group usually outweigh a strategy for one child, if the strategy may slow down the group. Experienced principals usually try to remind teachers of the importance of meeting individual needs and should work with teachers by providing instructional resources, additional help, or information on innovative practices. New principals, however, for the first time see the school as a whole—and, often, lots of children who are not making it—and the principal is responsible for all these children. Obviously, for these new principals, this is a considerable frustration. Immediate solutions are often difficult to find for struggling students.

It's difficult to become an instant sage. A new principal in his mid-30s had a veteran teacher, close to retirement, enter the office one afternoon after school to ask the principal for advice about what to do on retirement. The newcomer was struck by this image of the older, white-haired teacher coming to this newcomer for advice. If anything, it was the new principal who should be going to the veteran teacher for advice. However, as the weeks progressed, many others asked critical questions that required the principal to respond. The newcomer realized that many people just expect the principal to know. If they only knew the truth!

A Profile of the New Principal

The following characterization may serve as a helpful summary of the above remarks about difficulties facing newcomers to the principalship.

After a few days as a principal, the newcomer realizes the preservice training program has not sufficiently prepared him or her for the job. The new principal is having trouble with experienced staff who are resisting "necessary changes" and former teaching colleagues who refuse to take the beginner seriously. The principal is not sure how to respond to teachers regarding students who are experiencing academic difficulties. The newcomer is surprised at the variety of responsibilities but is eager to accept all challenges.

As the year progresses, the new principal is somewhat disheartened because numerous details and ambivalence concerning evaluation stand in the way of spending more time as an instructional leader in classrooms and with teachers. Yet the beginner is still unsure—and a little fearful—about delegating responsibilities to free himself or herself to provide more time for instructional leadership. The new principal also is learning the values of significant others in the school, district, and community, and is accepting selected values. Finally, the beginner encounters difficulty receiving satisfactory assistance to cope with job realities.

Helping Prospective and New Principals Make the Grade

Identifying the problems of new principals is, of course, a first step in helping newcomers make the grade. We know what their particular concerns are. From there, we need to consider how we can help individuals acquire the socialization skills necessary for the principalship and then offer practical suggestions on how to succeed during those critical first years.

Socialization for the Principalship

A major aspect of socializing for a job is developing the kind of positive mindset that will best enable one to function effectively in the new position. As you reflect on the ideas below, try to step out of the arena for a moment and consider how these suggestions may affect your decisions.

The leader as learner—a habit of mind. The leader-as-learner concept (Bennis & Nanus, 1985) is a blessing to new principals. Why? Because the concept implies that the leader who is willing to learn has an excellent chance to succeed. Thus, when you are asking questions and soliciting ideas about how the school works, you are not revealing a weakness or ignorance but a desire to learn. You are letting others know, right from the start, that they are important, and without their information, you could not do the job. This is a refreshing attitude to see in a leader; most professional colleagues will appreciate the newcomer who wants to know how things really work. The key, though, is to keep this characteristic throughout your career.

Reflecting on your professional background. Sarason (1982) reminds us that as teachers, we often remember the evaluation process with some disdain. Do we carry this hostility for the process with us when we become principals? When becoming a principal, individuals need to examine their professional (and personal) experiences with evaluation to reflect on which of those experiences may enhance or inhibit possibilities for success. With regard to teaching experiences, prospective principals need to consider their feelings about classroom isolation; relationships with teachers and supervisors, students and parents; and the professional climate in their schools. For example, what kind of supervisory role models has one worked with? In addition to teaching experiences, new principals need to evaluate the type of university training received and how previous administrative positions may affect their performance. For instance, if one has served for several years as an athletic director, will he or she be able to make budgetary decisions fairly when the athletic budget may need slicing to provide more funds for a new program for a major group of non-English speakers entering the school district?

Developing a broad view. When teaching in a classroom or taking responsibility for a particular program, one does not have to consider the broad scope of responsibilities and multiple consequences of decisions that a principal experiences. To illustrate, imagine a cone-shaped funnel. The teacher can look toward the narrowing end of the funnel while the principal must look at the funnel becoming broader with increased responsibilities.

> There is a tendency, and I went through it myself, for teachers to feel that administrators forget that they were teachers once too. I don't think that's the case. I think that once you start operating from a different frame in the system, your outlook changes from single program to total program, and that causes some real problems. (A Principal's Voice)

Thus, for the principal, it is critical to look at the big picture. What is the mission of the school? What are the important goals of the school? It will certainly take the newcomer time to figure out how to decide collaboratively with the staff where the school should go and intends to go. When one sees the big picture, then it becomes easier to figure out which battles are worth fighting. For example, is it really important that a particular bulletin board was not changed on the due date? Shouldn't the real question be, How is that teacher doing in the classroom? The following statement from a new principal shows insight: "Step back, look at the whole program, and then step in again."

Exercising patience and flexibility—yet holding to your convictions. In relationships, leaders of an organization often have to deal with impatient individuals who want to see things change, yesterday. For example, the principal must remain calm and patient when that irate parent shows up or a teacher is upset because there are not enough textbooks or the school air conditioning system has broken down. Listening patiently is very important. However, when incorrect information is presented, it is equally important to give your point of view politely. For example, an angry parent says, "That teacher just doesn't care for my child." The principal's response: "I'm sorry you feel that way, Mr. Smith, but if the teacher did not care about your child, or any other child in this school, he would not be working here. We just don't operate that way."

Additionally, remaining flexible and actively listening is critical during discussions if one is going to remain open to various points of view. Yet, when all is said and done, it is very important to state your convictions. People need to know where the principal stands on issues.

> But, the one thing about change is that you're supposed to do it over a long period of time, and I've got to learn that. You are supposed to go in and be very low key the first year, and then the second year you're supposed to do that, and then the third year you're supposed to hit. Well, that's just not my personality. And people have to learn that that's not going to happen. If I know something has to be done to change academic achievement of kids, or their mental health, I'm not willing to wait one, two, or three years. I simply will not settle for that. (A Principal's Voice)

Coping with the loneliness and time factors. As stated previously, two problems that many newcomers face are loneliness and time difficulties associated with the position (i.e., both fragmented time and long hours). Interestingly, these two factors are connected in that there are extensive periods after school, in the evenings, or on the weekends when principals are alone at the office or working on the job at home. This, of course, is quite normal for many in professional work. However, because the principal's job can be so fragmented during the day, it may be that it is only during these "lonely" times when true reflection concerning the job can take place. And it is during these times that one must recall the important work that is taking place each day and consider ways to improve one's performance. Thus the prospective or new principal needs to recognize that loneliness and time constraints may be problems, but the problems also may present opportunities to improve one's effectiveness.

Practical Suggestions for Newcomers

"The buck stops here . . . for everything." Harry Truman was right. Thus it is important from day one on the job that the new principal accepts responsibility for whatever takes place in the school. Regarding the school operation, it is especially important to take responsibility for the items that may appear to be petty but are very significant for the teachers in the beginning of the year. For example, make sure that there are enough desks in each room, drinking fountains are working properly, toilets are flushing properly, and the lights are working in each classroom—Has that broken lock been fixed on the teacher's desk? These may seem like petty items when discussing instructional leadership, but it is very difficult to educate children if classroom lighting is inadequate.

Although whatever takes place in the school may, in the end, land on the principal's doorstep, it is important that one does not misinterpret "the buck stops here" to mean you cannot delegate and trust others with responsibility. If anything, it means surrounding yourself with the best possible teachers and support staff so all of the activities in a school that you cannot become involved in have the best people operating in those areas.

Seek out people—especially the experienced staff and secretary. If the three rules of real estate investing are location, location, location, then the three rules of the principalship are communicate, communicate, communicate. In the principalship, you are investing in people. It is critical for the new principal to seek out the experienced staff (especially the school secretary) to get their opinions about what works and what does not work in the school. They know the history of the school. By seeking these people out and carefully listening to what they have to say, there is an excellent chance that they will give you honest views of how things really are.

You might try to seek out veterans and some newer teachers to get a variety of views before the school year begins. If possible, send a letter to all staff members during the summer, letting them know that you look forward to meeting with them. At the first faculty meeting, let the staff members know that you are eager to learn and you would appreciate having them visit with you. These early meetings will also be your first opportunities to build up the trust to work productively in the future.

As the year progresses, continue to take the initiative regarding relationships with faculty, students, and parents. As you seek relationships, try as much as possible to meet "on their turf." The principal's office is daunting for many, and until others see you as approachable, it may not be the best place to meet. Teachers appreciate the principal who says, "Let's meet in your room."

Be visible. Visibility, from day one, is crucial. Your secretary needs to know that you believe the most important events in the school take place outside of your office. Research indicates that finding time to visit classrooms is especially difficult for new principals. By visiting the classrooms, library, cafeteria, labs, gymnasium, art studios, and music rooms, you are sending a strong message to the staff and students that what they are doing is important to you and the school.

Keep in mind that your visibility may very well be a new approach for staff members; make sure you let them know during the preschool faculty meetings that you believe that what takes place "out there" are the important events of the school, so you intend to be visible. Some of the staff may be skeptical about your motives at first, but most will soon appreciate your effort. As a consequence, visits later in the year to classes for teacher observations and interactions with students will, for most, be less stressful because everyone will know who the principal is.

Control your time. We have provided many suggestions in the book regarding time management strategies. However, a few points should be emphasized for newcomers. Although it is very difficult, try to take control of a significant part of your schedule. Block out time on your schedule for events that signify your commitment to the educational goals of the school. If the effort is not made, others will quickly fill up all of your time. During the year, constantly think about the school priorities and see if your schedule reflects those priorities. There will certainly be days and even weeks when you will not be able to meet your objectives, but keep on coming back to them. The teachers and your secretary should know your basic philosophy about time use. This will help ensure that teachers will usually be able to see you at times that are convenient for them. The secretary needs to know that teachers should never feel shut out when they want to see the principal. If the principal is unavailable at a particular time, then the secretary should set up an appointment for the next available time. In a less formal way, when teachers know that you are going to make the rounds during the day, they will often hold a miniconference with you.

Additionally, it is crucial to learn to say no to people and projects and to take a backseat on some committees and community requests for your time. For example, if the Cub Scouts ask you to speak at their annual awards ceremony, you should probably say yes, but that does not mean you should also say yes to the request that you join them on the overnight campout in April.

Make sure that you leave time for your own lunch and for leisure activities. Your productivity and spirit will suffer, and resentment may surface if the job becomes all-consuming.

> There have been some things that just wear on me personally. Part of that is the time factor that you're expected to spend, and expected by others, and you inflict on yourself. You just have to spend that amount of time. But I don't think it surprises me. It kind of eats away on me because I'm not real comfortable with it. (A Principal's Voice)

Model the desire to grow professionally. In the long run, this may be the area in which you make your most significant contribution in serving students and teachers. Begin modeling a desire to grow professionally as a principal. Share professional articles and recommend journals to the staff. Let them know about professional growth opportunities. Share with them your professional growth objectives during your first year. For example, as a new principal, you should try to get involved with a mentor, either in the district, through a local university, or possibly through a state principals' center. Subscribe to professional journals and try to attend state and national association meetings. Share your experiences with the staff. When you have the time, continue to read about the principalship. It can be very therapeutic—and you will find out that you are not alone!

Final Reflections on the Newcomer Experience

Coping with the daily events of a school and all the constituencies that go along with a school can be very overwhelming for a new principal. Yet there is no greater feeling than to be part of a school community and to know that you made a difference in the success of that community. The newcomer to the principalship, during his or her first year, can make a contribution to a school community every bit as significant as the 10-year veteran of the principalship.

Often, new principals are told that they will experience a honeymoon period in which they will be forgiven for their early mistakes. However, it may be foolish to hope for such a present. It is more important for the newcomer to assume that many mistakes will be made, and not only during the first years. But if the principal is a learner, he or she will grow professionally through each mistake. If the teachers, students, and parents perceive that the newcomer is growing, trust will slowly build; they all want to be proud of their principal. Then, as a community of learners, the principal, teachers, and students can grow together.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. What were some of the major difficulties you faced (or are facing) during your first year as a principal?
2. What characteristics would be suitable for a principal mentor? On what areas of study would you like to focus, given the opportunity to work with a mentor?

3. Do you agree with the characterization of the principalship as a lonely position?
4. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

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Taking Care of Yourself

Educators would do well to ponder Elizabeth Cady Stanton's injunction that self-development is a higher duty than self-sacrifice.

BARTH (1990, p. 47)

Principals must take care of themselves in order to care for others. Setting an example as a leader does not end with the leadership, instructional, and management roles of a principal. Does the staff get a chance to see you relaxed during the day, enjoying the job, and slowing down the pace when necessary? What about how your private life may influence your job performance? In all walks of life, if you come to work unhappy or stressed out, it takes a tremendous amount of energy and psychological manipulation to reverse your disposition in order to function effectively for others and yourself. Moreover, if you want your staff to take time off and enjoy vacations and professional growth opportunities, then you owe it to yourself to enjoy vacations and growth opportunities. If the school leader is not refreshed when the year begins, then the school year is off to an ominous start.

The Selfish Nature of Martyrdom

School leaders, because of pressure and long hours, can easily begin to see themselves as martyrs and burn out in their quest for martyrdom. Much has been written about the effect of burnout on principals and about good people leaving the profession because of too much stress. We have to learn to take care of ourselves. It seems that everyone wants a piece of the principal's time. But if the slices are too small, no one can derive the benefits.

One principal shared the following personal experience:

> I was very proud of myself because I did not take time for lunch during my first 6 years in the principalship. How foolish! I thought I was setting an example for the staff of how to effectively use time by meeting with teachers during my lunch hour. Often, I would eat my sandwich during a meeting demonstrating how hard I was working. My favorite line was "Do you mind if I eat during our meeting?" Undoubtedly, I enjoyed the martyrdom. Two years ago, I started taking 30-40 minutes a day for lunch to have real time away from my office. And do you know, the school did not burn down! In fact, I doubt if anyone noticed that I was out. I think the staff probably felt more at ease with my decision. Moreover, skipping lunch was not a healthy example for the teachers. Following lunch I was relaxed and refreshed. I was ready to work in the afternoon. (A Principal's Voice)

Taking Control of Your Schedule to Care for Yourself

Unless we proactively organize our schedule with a lunch hour, leisure time, and other activities that refresh us, it will not happen. Thus, as you plan your schedule, build leisure time in. Place it on your schedule just as you place a school meeting on the calendar. The idea, obviously, is not to place these activities during the school day at prime times but, rather, to allocate time for daily personal activities at the beginning or end of the day to recharge your batteries. For example, if you need to leave at 5:00 p.m., it should be noted on your appointment calendar so you do not miss that jog, basketball game, or tennis match.

Interestingly, the professional development time that you might take to read a journal to "stay on top of the field" is the first thing to go when unimportant but pressing items arise in the schedule. Yet, if we are to grow and our staff are to grow, we need to recognize that reading a professional journal in our office is as important as any other aspect of the job. Professional reading time should be identified on the calendar and used accordingly. Also, we need to allocate time to reflect, write, and read about the principalship and follow other professional interests—and there should be other interests. These interests need to become part of our professional and personal schedule. Taking time out for yourself gives you an opportunity to think about your own experiences and your interaction with the staff. You can gain a greater understanding of the faculty by taking the time to reflect on why a teacher acted in a particular way or made a comment that seemed inappropriate. This can help a principal to respond appropriately when addressing the needs of colleagues.

A Personal Mission Statement

An interesting and productive activity would be to develop a personal mission statement based on your professional and personal goals to transcend the day-to-day responsibilities and keep your long-term vision in mind (Covey, 1989). As you develop the mission statement, consider the following questions:

- When you retire from education, how do you want to be remembered?
- What do you want teachers, parents, and most of all, students to say about you?
- What will be your legacy as a principal?
- What kind of a friend are you?
- How productive are you outside of your professional work?
- What should be written on your tombstone?

Such questions cause one to connect daily activities with a meaningful, long-range vision.

Gaining Perspective by Spending Time With Students

When a principal feels stressed, the "batteries can be recharged" by taking time to visit with a class or spending a few minutes with students on the playground, in the halls, or in a courtyard. Students appreciate spending time with the principal, and this helps to spread the message that the principal is more than the office figure or school disciplinarian. Having students see you as a "real person" helps in the process of building relationships with all students. Principals should consider taking occasional field trips with classes. The trip gives the principal an opportunity to spend quality time with students, teachers, and parents. One principal rides the bus with students once a month. Another greets students at the bus when they arrive every morning. These acts not only build relationships but also inform the principal about the pulse of the school.

The Body and Mind, Healthy and Ill Together[1]

If you do not feel well, it is hard to help others while on the job. From a practical viewpoint, the better you feel, the better you will perform. Your personal level of health and well-being must be maintained if you are to perform effectively on or off the job. This concept of well-being is dependent on attention to three areas: physical, physiological, and psychological. Although these are three separate areas, their functions are interrelated. For example, when you are stressed, often you do not sleep well or eat properly. You may indulge in too many sweets, which can adversely affect your blood sugar level and put your system out of balance. A quick examination of these three interrelated categories can help you to see the importance of paying attention to your personal well-being.

Physical Awareness

We all like to have greater energy. A primary way to gain greater energy is to make sure that, through exercise, we have the strength to make it through each day. It is interesting that we all recognize, from a commonsense view, how increased energy and endurance can sustain us with a greater degree of alertness through the day. Yet we still fail to take the necessary steps, before or after work, to fine-tune our bodies to perform at a higher physical level while on the job.

The physical aspect of well-being can be maintained through systematic exercise to improve our cardiovascular fitness. Also, systematic exercise releases endorphins in our body that can have a soothing effect on our mind and relieve stress. And, of course, from a physical standpoint, exercise, energy, and longevity are inextricably linked for most people.

Unfortunately, when time gets tight on the job, exercise is often the first thing to go. Planning your own prescheduled exercise program or joining an exercise group or club that meets at a specific time may be a good start. Needless to say, the exercise program should go on to your schedule, and you should not be shy about saying that you need to leave work at a certain time to make your appointment. Because of the facilities often available in schools, you may be able to get your exercise on-site if you do not feel that you need a different environment to relax. Another possible solution is to try and commit to an exercise program or sports activity with a friend. This serves two purposes. First, the friend will expect you to show up! Second, having a friend to talk with can help to get your mind off of work, if necessary, and reduce stress.

Physiological Awareness

The old adage "You are what you eat" holds some truth. Although nutritionists and physicians may disagree on some specifics as to what is good to eat and what is not, there are certain principles that apply to most people. For example, moderation of consumption is better than excess. Overindulgence in food or inappropriate foods can lead to adverse consequences for your body and mind. Excessive food intake at meals can lead to marked swings in blood sugar levels. This physiological occurrence can lead to unwanted alterations of brain function, adversely affect attention and creativity, and contribute to lethargy. Unfortunately, overindulgence or erratic eating habits are most common when we are under stress.

Even when one strives to maintain a balanced diet, often the rapid pace of the day makes a principal skip meals or choose inappropriate foods. Principals should prepare for this eventuality by planning and having some healthy food that is quickly accessible and provides for both energy and brain power. Also, complex carbohydrates such as fruits and vegetables are a good source of food. Low-fat foods are helpful. For example, there are many low-fat breakfast foods and snacks on the market (e.g., bagels, granola bars, low-fat crackers). Keep these items readily available in your desk or refrigerator. Too often, it is a temptation to have a candy bar and indulge in the wrong snack when under stress or when a busy schedule may lead to omitting a meal.

Psychological Awareness

Psychological rest or peace of mind takes place when your behaviors match your values and beliefs. There is more to life than the job. If you have peace of mind, that feeling can positively affect the level of energy that you give to your job or personal life. Unfortunately, principals may often experience psychological discomfort by doing things that they do not enjoy (e.g., completing reams of paperwork, responding very politely or patiently when one would like to take a more aggressive stance). You need to anticipate that this will happen and have a plan for this. In a proactive way, anticipate that stress will enter your life and plan how you will cope. Different people will handle stress in different ways. Some take comfort by spending time with family or friends; others go for a walk, exercise, read a book, travel, get in the car, or pursue a hobby such as art or music. Having an outlet is very important because it gives us an alternative to reduce stress and brings a richness to our lives, enabling us to be more well rounded and aware of other ways of doing things.

Finally, it cannot be stressed too often that it is very difficult to make an effective contribution to an organization if one is functioning below par because of physical, physiological, or psychological reasons. Principals owe it to themselves, their families, and their profession to do what they can to maintain a high level of physical and psychological well-being.

Maintaining Institutional and Individual Balance

Principals also need to be careful about letting the institutional and bureaucratic values smother them; one's individuality can be lost with the pressures to conform. It is hard to feel good about yourself if you know that your individual convictions are always being sacrificed to preserve the status quo. But it is very difficult to overcome the socialized pressures within the system. Interestingly, principals to a great extent have been socialized as "school folks" sometimes their whole life—responding to bells, following a certain calendar, and always relating to students, teachers, and administrators.

The classical business and sociological theorists Barnard (1938, pp. 8-21) and Merton (1957, pp. 195-201) agreed that over time, bureaucracies depersonalize or stifle individuals to satisfy bureaucratic needs. Merton, for example, maintained that bureaucratic controls such as career promotions and salary increments force individuals to adapt their behavior to official regulations. Furthermore, individuals can become so engrossed in bureaucratic roles that they may disregard their responsibility to assist clientele to preserve the common interests of bureaucratic colleagues. For schools, this can mean neglecting the needs of children or blocking necessary change to satisfy the professional or support staff.

These valuable insights clearly indicate that a strong possibility exists for principals to become the organization. Principals become increasingly socialized as the years of service increase. Moreover, one is less likely to promote change in the organization if maintaining the bureaucratic status quo becomes one's mission and personality. Reflective activities can help principals maintain their individuality and keep the organizational or institutional bureaucracy in perspective. Activities such as reading, writing, and exercising while away from the job can help to reduce the bureaucratic ties to the organization and help the practitioner hold on to his or her individuality.

Note

1. We would like to thank Dr. David Jay Caro, from San Mateo General Hospital, for his assistance with this chapter.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. Have you learned how to say no in order to provide yourself with quality time away from the job? Think of three school situations and practice how you would say no in each situation.
2. How do you feel about reading a professional journal while in your office? How do you think the staff would react to seeing you read a journal during the day?

3. How much have you become "the organization"?
4. What are you doing or might you do to take care of yourself?
5. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

21

Keeping the Professional Candle Lit

Through learning we re-create ourselves.

Senge (1990, p. 14)

How does a practitioner remain on the cutting edge of the profession? Before accepting the principalship, he or she is often taking courses and learning as much as possible about the job. Unfortunately, once in the position, the practitioner is so busy that it is difficult to keep the professional candle lit. Again, taking a proactive approach is the only way to stay on top of the field regarding leadership and educational literature. No one else is going to take care of ensuring your professional growth.

Institutionalizing Professional Growth Activities

The key to remaining proactive is to institutionalize specific activities through memberships, conferences, writing, relationships, and the creative use of time. As has been emphasized throughout this book, the personal example set by the principal can be a strong motivator for the staff. Teachers will notice if you are current in your field and if you can be counted on to keep them current. Moreover, by staying abreast of the field through professional activities and professional relationships, routines are broken, which helps to keep the practitioner stimulated, thus reducing the possibility of burnout.

There are many activities that can be institutionalized and will require your professional dedication and attention. It is just a matter of choosing what is best for you. Probably the most important action the practitioner can take is to become actively involved in one or two professional organizations. Active involvement means attending the state and, if possible, national conferences of the organization and reading the journals sponsored by the organizations. The logical organizations for principals are the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (both organizations address the needs of middle school principals). The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and the National Staff Development Council are also key national organizations for principals. All four organizations hold annual conferences that are sure to keep practitioners on the cutting edge in the field.

The national associations also sponsor leadership academies in the form of 1- or 2-day workshops throughout the school year and longer workshops during the summer. Many states have principals' centers, often affiliated with universities. The opportunity to network with colleagues through the associations, workshops, principals' centers, and universities should not be missed. In fact, the loneliness of the principalship as a day-to-day feature of the job almost makes the networking through the various organizations imperative.

The opportunity to meet with other principals is especially important for the newcomer who needs affirmation that he or she is on the right track. Moreover, developing a mentor relationship through the organization can be an asset for newcomers and veteran principals. By becoming a member of specific associations and building the annual conferences into the schedule, the principal will not have to worry on a day-to-day basis whether he or she will have a chance to meet with colleagues and keep up on issues in the field.

The principal should institutionalize subscriptions to several journals for himself or herself and the school. The national principal associations all publish journals for elementary, middle, and high school principals. *Educational Leadership* (ASCD), the *Phi Delta Kappan*, and the *Journal of Staff Development* would be excellent additional choices. *Teacher* and *Instructor* would be good hands-on choices for elementary school principals. Education Week is a good source for current events in education, especially as related to national and state political agendas.

To keep the professional candle lit for teachers, each school should be getting journals in the various disciplines. Publications for elementary, middle, and high schools are produced by all the major organizations such as the National Council for Social Studies, the

National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Each department should keep up to date. In elementary schools, the *Arithmetic Teacher* or the *Reading Teacher*, for example, should be subscribed to and distributed to the staff or kept in a professional library.

As principals are in key leadership positions, they have much in common with those leading noneducational organizations. Thus it can be very helpful to subscribe to a professional journal outside of the educational field. For example, *Harvard Business Review* has excellent articles on leadership that not only give ideas that principals can use but also let principals know what is taking place "out there." This can be very helpful information when making curriculum decisions to prepare students for the world of work.

Beyond journals, the practitioner should maintain a professional library with modern classics in the educational field (to revisit) and current books of interest on leadership and educational issues. A good selection would include books on educational philosophy, curriculum, the life of principals and teachers, and leadership books from the business and education world. (It goes without saying that books other than those that are education related are certainly welcome.) Important educators of the 20th century are always interesting to examine to see what is new and what is old (e.g., Dewey, Tyler, Hutchins, Taba, Cremin).

Listening to books on tape when driving to and from work or jogging can also be professionally productive. These tapes might have been ordered from professional conferences, from association catalogs, or purchased from bookstores. Watching professional videos has become a very popular activity with colleagues in school or in the comfort of one's home. Principals can play the key role in ensuring that schools receive professional audio- and videotapes for all school professionals.

Visiting other schools can also be very rewarding. Drucker (1992) refers to this as managing by wandering around—outside. Spending a day in another school with another principal in the district can certainly help one to pick up a couple of tips on how others do the job. In fact, the opportunity to visit a school outside of your district or in another state may be more advantageous because one is likely to see activities and curriculum projects a bit different from those in the home district. The experience may even lead to a strong professional friendship.

Reflection as a Tool

The importance of reflection has been stressed throughout the book. Keeping a journal certainly can help one to reflect about the job and any other aspect of one's life. Often, the experience of seeing one's ideas in writing helps to affirm convictions and brings greater insight to a particular problem. As the journal grows, one can reflect on past experiences—so that is how I handled this problem last time! Reflection is a great asset and can help one to avoid making the same mistake. To illustrate, in July of 1993, golf great Jack Nicklaus played the Senior Open Golf Tournament. As he led the tournament till the 12th hole, he recalled playing on the same course and approaching the 12th hole more than 30 years ago. He reflected back to that earlier tournament. He vowed not to make the same mistake that he had made in 1960. He won the Senior Open by one stroke.

Writing can extend beyond the journal to professional articles authored alone or with colleagues. Writing with another principal, consultant, or university professor may be the best route for the practitioner because it becomes very easy to drop a project when you are working alone and busy with the day-to-day responsibilities of the principalship. It is very helpful to have someone driving you on. (The word processor will hold your ideas until you are ready to return to them!) Involvement in action research projects with teachers in your school also can be very rewarding. Presenting the results of the research project as a workshop during a state or national conference can be an important extension of the effort.

Holding a miniconference in a school or on a university campus could be a great way to stimulate a staff. The faculty could get together to recommend speakers to the administration. Administrators and faculty members could present at the conference, possibly during a staff development or inservice day or afternoon.

A Principal's Portfolio

Whether a principal is remaining in a school for several years or preparing to move on, developing and updating a principal's portfolio is a valuable resource to keep a record of and reflect on one's growth during a particular school year and over one's career. The portfolio could open with a personal mission statement, professional goals, and schoolwide goals and objectives. The orientation of the portfolio should be to demonstrate growth within a particular area or areas. At times, principals may elect to identify themes for their portfolios: enhancing student work, building positive parent-community-school relationships, staff development, teacher evaluation, professional presentations, or reflections. This portfolio can serve as a valuable resource when applying for new positions.

Artifacts may include photographs of the faculty, students, and classroom activities; important staff development ideas; journal entries; speeches; staff evaluations; newspaper articles about the school; important memos; faculty meeting agendas; letters or notes from students, parents, community members, and faculty; a video of school activities and the activity calendar of the school year; notes for possible journal articles; student work; information on awards given to students or faculty; information on workshops or conferences attended; presentations made to the school community or at professional meetings; organizations that one belongs to; conferences attended; and family photos.

Other Growth Opportunities

Involvement in a support group on a topic of interest can also be rewarding. The support group may sponsor topics such as global education, the at-risk student, alternatives to ability grouping, or mainstreaming. The group may meet at lunch or even during dinner at various houses during the year.

Seeking out people with similar and alternative views to join a group can be very stimulating. Many schools are instituting Socratic seminars for teachers and administrators to discuss various issues, usually unrelated to school. These seminars may occur after school and on a variety of topics. The bottom line is that colleagues get together to discuss a short story, poem, work of art, film, or anything else that may stimulate the group.

Working to develop a professional lounge area in the school can be a significant professional boost for administrators and teachers. This should be an area to exchange professional articles, books, and ideas. Principals should encourage teachers to pass professional articles to the principal to help him or her stay on top of particular issues and, probably more important, remain informed regarding what teachers think is important. Having an area in the school for professional reading just might make it easier for administrators and teachers to spend time there during a school day—actually building the time into their weekly schedules. The actual physical structure for professional reflection can symbolize the importance of remaining on the cutting edge.

Finally, remaining intellectually stimulated throughout one's career is a tall order. Yet we know that financial rewards can go only so far in keeping one's professional candle lit. We need to create our own opportunities for professional growth through institutionalizing professional interaction, reflections, and readings. It is through these encounters that we remain alert and ready to approach the next challenge. We have to work on our own professional development; no one else can take the initiative for us. By nurturing our own growth, we are able to enhance our ability to serve and help others grow.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. Are you keeping your professional candle lit? Discuss this with a colleague.
2. Which two or three professional development activities discussed in this chapter can you use?
3. What are some additional ideas that should be added to the chapter?
4. What insights or new questions do you have as a result of reflecting on the ideas presented in this chapter?

22

Reflections on the Principalship

The power of personal example is the essence of true leadership.

STEPHEN COVEY

A school is much more than a physical structure; it is a community made up of adults and children engaged in a journey that will lead to greater understanding for all. To help students, a principal serves teachers by empowering them to be the best they can be. As servant leaders, school principals find that their professional vocation is, in many ways, a calling. When principals meet that calling and serve teachers, students, and parents effectively, students have a greater opportunity to enhance their skills in a climate that promotes growth, understanding, and a love of learning.

Serving the School Community

As a school leader, a principal's foremost asset may be his or her ability to *lead by example*. How principals conduct themselves on the job—what they pay attention to—says more about their leadership ability than any specific decision, regardless of how important. Leading by example must be sincere; if a principal is uncomfortable with small children or teenagers, the nonverbal cues will quickly be picked up by the students. Moreover, if the personal example lacks consistency, others will soon comment about the lack of sincerity on the part of the principal. Thus, on reflecting on the principalship and considering experience and sound theory, the authors believe that the following behaviors and characteristics, when modeled consistently, can go a long way in helping a principal best serve a school.

The importance of positive human interaction has been a main feature of this book; therefore, it should not surprise the reader that leading by example must include *respecting and dignifying each individual* connected with the school. Students must see the principal as someone who believes in them and respects them for what they are and what they can become. Teachers must see in the principal someone who has great respect for the teachers' professional role and what they can bring to students. Dignifying the classroom teacher is of paramount importance and should be exercised often by the principal during public and private occasions. Parents should see the principal as someone who listens to them and displays concern and interest when with students.

The principal leads through learning. There is no setting in which this concept of the leader as learner is more applicable. This leadership role can be achieved by promoting several ideas. For example, when working with teachers in a supervisory role, principals must create an atmosphere that fosters mutual trust and growth. Trust is a requisite characteristic if one is to take chances in a professional relationship. Teachers must feel that they can trust the principal if risk taking is to occur during a class lesson. Furthermore, principals and teachers need to believe that they will grow from the relationship if they are to talk honestly during conferences about their profession and discuss what they think they are doing right and ways they can improve.

Additionally, as a leader of learners, the principal needs to provide the structure and forum to ensure that a dialogue concerning curriculum, teaching, and student learning takes place throughout the school. The principal needs to participate in this dialogue as an equal member, sharing articles, structuring faculty meetings to open dialogue, promoting staff development in and out of the school, creating areas in the school for professional discussion, promoting classroom visitations by colleagues, and recognizing those teachers who are growing professionally. The dialogue that develops can create lasting relationships and a synergy that demonstrates the strength of the group.

As ideas are generated, *the school principal must give credit to teachers and others* whose ideas and dedication improve the school program. Stephen Covey (1989) calls this strategy "the abundance principle" in which credit for successful actions is spread around as much as possible. Furthermore, principals need to hire the best personnel available and show a willingness to give them the freedom to use their talents to maximize student learning and solve the never-ending challenges that face schools.

Giving credit to others, inspiring colleagues to solve difficult tasks, and taking satisfaction when the accomplishments of associates bring them into the limelight may be difficult for some, but it is a necessary requirement for successful leadership. Thus Drucker (1992) emphasizes,

> But precisely because an effective leader knows that he, and no one else, is ultimately responsible, he is not afraid of strength in associates and subordinates . . . an effective leader wants strong associates; he encourages them, pushes them, indeed glories in them. Because he holds himself ultimately responsible for the mistakes of his associates and subordinates, he also sees the triumphs of his associates and subordinates as his triumphs, rather than as threats. . . . An effective leader knows, of course, that there is a risk; able people tend to be ambitious. But he realizes that it is a much smaller risk than to be served by mediocrity. (pp. 121-122)

Encouraging others to be strong associates or co-leaders can be frustrating for principals who have been raised on the formula of "the principal as instructional leader" or the one who must say "the buck stops here." Yet these are the days of shared governance. Is shared governance consistent with "the buck stops here"? Some make a distinction between shared decision making, in which the principal takes input but ultimately decides and takes responsibility, versus shared governance, in which decision makers share accountability. Principals are serving during a time of change in which shared leadership is an option that is receiving serious consideration. We have learned that the factory worker may know more about how the company works than the executive on the top floor. Barth's insight regarding this dilemma may be helpful: "It's far more powerful to join with others to do what needs to be done" (quoted in Sparks, 1993, p. 20). School principals are joining with others to try to make schools work better. But principals know and accept that for the most part, *teachers, students, parents, and the community continue to expect the principal to take ultimate responsibility.*

Effective communicators recognize active listening as an essential communication skill. The image of the leader who dominates a group discussion is inappropriate in a setting that thrives on teamwork and developing ideas through mutual understanding. Many school leaders who achieved their success because of their decisiveness and public speaking ability may have a difficult time becoming good listeners and reflective thinkers. Yet creative ideas and solutions often occur after listening, reflecting, and working in groups.

Real listening with patience and attention is critical if one is truly trying to support and foster growth in others. Showing concern for students, teachers, and parents means hearing them out. Listening shows support and may go a long way in meeting the needs of colleagues or others in the school community. Often, individuals do not come right out and say what it is that is bothering them. Active listening, then, means trying to find out the subtle messages—what is really being said? At that point, it is possible to begin meeting the needs of others. To illustrate, when conferencing with teachers, principals will find that as the trust relationship begins to grow, teaching colleagues will take small "leaps of faith" to explore how sincere the principal is about trust and working with them. Unless a principal is listening carefully to the teacher, the principal may very well and quite inadvertently miss the leap on the part of the teacher.

The school principal should also remember that it is important to *recognize one's own basic needs.* That is, one's private life, responsibility to family, and need for leisure and recreation should not be sacrificed. A workaholic is not a better principal than someone who knows how to manage his or her time and who takes the time for family and friends. A principal's life outside of school must receive the time and energy necessary for success so a positive attitude on the job is an extension of his or her private life.

As part of our basic humanity, it is important also to *take in stride both the successes and frustrations of the job.* One should not be too enthralled with the positive press—when it happens. On the other hand, do not get too upset with the negative reviews. Reflection is a characteristic needed in both situations. What happened? What can I learn from this experience? Find the humorous side when possible. Bringing in humor often helps to relieve tension, reduce one's feelings of self-importance, and place an issue in a more realistic perspective.

When the negative reviews appear or when individuals complain, one should behave in an ethical manner. Regardless of tactics used by others, *the school leader should always represent the best in society.* Character is very important when crises occur. In fact, character is the key in a crisis, and character is often judged not by what one says but by how one acts. Persons who whisper but act righteously are heard loud and clear. Stay above the fray and avoid the shouting match. As one principal said, "What you do speaks so loudly I can't hear what you say!"

Where Do We Go From Here?

Of course, there are no formulas for successful leadership that can be universally applied. An individual who exhibits or models some of the above characteristics may still fail if he or she is unable to analyze situations appropriately. The challenge is to find out what works in a particular setting. Newell (1978) stressed that "effective leadership is possible only through an analysis of the situational elements in a particular system" (p. 242). Each school is different; therefore, each leadership situation is different. In the end, the effective leader, collaborating and building relationships with teachers, parents, and students, must discover how to meet the needs of students in a specific setting. And the discovery will show that no secret formula exists; the setting will dictate the needs.

Because there are no secret formulas, frustration can be a constant companion in the principalship. Yet the frustration can lead to success if one always searches for solutions and has faith in one's ability to face challenges with the help of others. In facing the challenges, a vision of the good school is essential. So what is our vision of the good school? What will one see on entering the doors of the school?

The Good School

When entering the school, a visitor quickly perceives that students and teachers are enjoying their time there. Here is where they want to teach and learn. The visitor notices that most students are actively interested and engaged in learning. Teachers are enthusiastic about their work. Student interest is shown through obvious excitement while working at a hands-on activity or through a look of serenity when quietly reading a book.

Some classroom teachers may, at first, be difficult to spot—they are sitting next to students or with groups of students. In another room, a teacher is talking to the class, his gestures indicating excitement about a student comment. In fact, the visitor notices that most teachers are enjoying their work and are patiently listening and helping students. In various classes, students display looks of concentration and puzzlement, mixed with expressions of satisfaction and frequent smiles. The school visitor observes that some students seem less interested than others, yet the teachers are giving them equal time and showing patience when necessary. No students appear to be overlooked.

The visitor observes that the library and computer rooms are busy throughout the day. In both areas, there are students working individually, in groups, or with teachers. In other areas such as the music, art, physics, or foreign language rooms, students are all actively engaged, talking about their work, singing, writing, reading, drawing, experimenting, and showing interest in what they are doing.

Dropping into various classrooms with the principal, the visitor and principal notice a variety of teaching techniques. Some teachers are using overhead projectors while speaking with students, others are sitting with students, and a couple of teachers are walking around their rooms observing groups or watching students work individually. One teacher is lecturing, another is reading silently with his class, and another is writing in her journal with the class. Interestingly, the principal and visitor observe a lot of smiling faces in the various classrooms. The principal notices that students are unafraid to give "incorrect" answers and, at times, respectfully challenge a teacher's answer.

Our visitor notices that the teachers' lounge is frequented by colleagues who enjoy one another's company and share in the joys and frustrations of their classroom experiences. While in the lounge, teachers share a light experience, the humor of a classroom event. It is clear that this group of teachers works and plays together. They share professional articles, problem solve, and encourage one another to pursue professional development opportunities. They team teach, co-plan, and peer coach.

On the playground, students are obviously enjoying themselves playing games or sitting and talking. In the middle and high schools, peer counselors are spending time with students who are new to the school or are having some difficulties. In the elementary school, a couple of kindergarten students run up to the principal proudly announcing that they picked up some litter from the sidewalk to keep the school clean.

The school buildings and grounds are inviting. The entrance doors to the school are murals, painted in bright colors by students. The halls of the school are lined with student work. The high school includes a permanent fine arts display that rotates the art, poetry, photographs, and ceramic work of various students. The bathrooms and cafeteria are clean and graffiti free.

In general, the visitor perceives pride and a caring attitude regarding how adults feel about students and the school. The visitor's perception is based on the positive interaction observed between teachers and students, secretaries and teachers, maintenance personnel and the principal, and students and the cafeteria workers.

At the end of the day, the visitor notices that neither teachers nor administrators rush to leave the school. Many staff members remain in their classes either working quietly, helping individual students, or conferencing with parents. The principal is seen standing by the school buses saying good-bye to students and asking them how the school day went.

Take Time to Smell the Roses

A vision of the good school can help principals hold on to their convictions concerning what schooling should be all about. The vision and one's convictions can steer the school through rough seas and keep the school on course—a course guided by the needs of the students, needs that can be satisfied when exposed to a challenging school experience in a climate nurtured by caring adults.

As you reflect on your role in accomplishing this, take time to celebrate your deeds, learn from mistakes, "smell the roses" daily, make connections with others, and maintain a positive outlook for the future.

Reflections

This space is intended to provide an opportunity for you to write in ideas that have been generated by this chapter, things you want to try, or adaptations of ideas presented herein.

1. Create two to three questions representing your own reflections on the principalship. Share these with a colleague.
2. What do you do to stay on course?
3. What actions will you take as a result of these readings?
4. What are some things you want to learn more about?

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